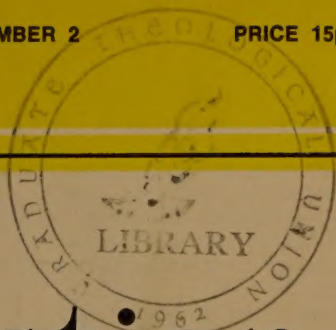


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FORTIS IN FIDE

Fr. Werentried van Straaten

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Thank you so much.

—Paul Crane, S.J.

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Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

VOLUME 23

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Law or Licence ?

THE EDITOR

THE temptation to lower standards in the interests of supposed personal popularity or, at a somewhat higher level, misplaced zeal for souls is one that has beset the Church to a greater or less degree ever since its foundation. Indeed, the Founder Himself was subjected to it in the third of the three temptations which Satan thrust at Him during His forty days in the wilderness. What Christ was offered was all the kingdoms of the the world, then in Satan's grip because unredeemed as yet if, "bowing down", Christ would adore him; which meant, in fact, lower His standards, softening the hard edge of perennial values which shrined His teaching and accommodating His words to the permissive values of contemporary paganism. At this point, Christ bade Satan begone : "The Lord thy God thou shalt adore and Him only shalt thou serve". Later, many of Christ's disciples were to leave Him because He preached a doctrine too hard for their liking. Not Peter : "Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou has the words of eternal life". God's truth was in Christ's words. It had to be and it bound them all because He was God.

The temptation remains within the Church to whom Christ, Who was God, consigned God's truth. Latterly it has become fashionable in some dubious theological and pastoral quarters to deny that God's Law, as such, is binding on all. Permissiveness finds shelter within the

gratuitous assertion that the Ten Commandments, for example, constitute, indeed, an ideal to be striven for, but do not bind "ordinary" Christians with the rigour of law. What this means, in fact—in the field of contraception, for instance—is that its practice by a Catholic couple need not be rated objectively as seriously sinful, once it is recognised that a non-contraceptive union is an ideal and, as such, not something enjoined by law and binding on all. "Mature" Christians, these sophist pastoral theologians say, may indeed be bound by the commandments as law, but surely not "ordinary" Christians, whoever they may be. God's Law, in other words, binds different people differently. Turned into an ideal, it becomes a relative and flexible thing. Thereby the gate is thrown open to permissiveness—of the sort that has plagued the Anglican Church in this country. Far from filling its churches, it has tended to empty them; one of the many lessons lost on the members of the post-conciliar theological and pastoral establishment within the Catholic Church.

The theory behind the gratuitously false point of view outlined above has come to be known as that in support of "the gradualness of the law", which only binds as such at a certain level of maturity. It is gaining ground within the Church. Pope John Paul condemned it in the closing speech which he made to the Synod of Bishops in Rome on October 25th, 1980. He distinguished this false view from that which opposes correctly "the law of gradualness" to the "gradualness of the law". The former says rightly that God's law is there and binds us all — tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief; that obeying it is a difficult business, that all are not equally successful in their obedience for a whole host of reasons; but that, provided we seek God's Grace through prayer, He will give us the strength to come through: "My grace is sufficient for you".

This is true Catholic teaching. The alternative view is, I am afraid, no more than gratuitous nonsense. As such, it should be shunned and its progressive exponents given as wide a berth as possible.

In this, the first of two articles, Michael Davies shows how the Holy Eucharist cannot be given to anyone, who is not a member of the Catholic Church which is the Mystical Body of Christ, without contradicting the very nature of the Sacrament itself. Acknowledgements to *The Remnant*.

Sacrament of Unity

MICHAEL DAVIES

EVERY Catholic is bound to believe that the Catholic Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, Who is her founder, her head, her savior, and her support. The Church is a body composed of different members organically united to one another, and possessing a common end or purpose. The mandate entrusted by Christ to His Church is, as Pope Leo XIII teaches in *Satis cognitum* (29 June 1896), "the same mandate which He had received from the Father". Pope Leo explains that the mission of Christ, and the mission of the *one* Church He founded, is "to save that which had perished, that is to say, not some nations or peoples, but the whole human race without distinction of time and place".

Visible Government

Because the Church is a body She is visible. She is united by visible bonds. The first of these is a visible government. Pope Leo XIII taught in his Encyclical *Annum ingressi sumus* (15 March 1902):

Christianity is, in fact, incarnate in the Catholic Church; it is to be identified with that *perfect and spiritual Society, sovereign in its sphere, which is the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ*, and has for its visible head the Roman Pontiff, successor of the Prince of the Apostles. She is the continuation of the Savior's mission, the daughter of the redemption and its heir; she has spread the Gospel and defended it at the price of her life's

blood; and, strong in the divine assistance and the immortality which have been promised her, she never compromises with error, she remains faithful to the mandate which she has received to bear the teaching of Jesus Christ to the world, and to keep it inviolable in its integrity to the end of time.

Visible Unity in the Faith

The second bond by which the Church is visibly united is that of visible unity in the Faith. This unity, to quote *Satis cognitum* again:

... should be so closely knit and so perfect amongst His followers that it might, in some measure, shadow forth the union between Himself and His Father: "I pray that they all may be one as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee".

Agreement and union of minds is the necessary foundation of this perfect concord among men, from which concurrence of will and similarity of actions are the natural results. Wherefore, in His divine wisdom. He ordained in His Church *Unity of Faith*: a virtue which is the first of those bonds which united man to God, and whence we receive the name of the "faithful—one Lord, one faith, one baptism". . . . Christ instituted in the Church *a living, authoritative, and permanent Magisterium*, which by its own power He strengthened, by the Spirit of Truth He taught, and by miracles confirmed. He willed and ordered, under the gravest penalties, that its teachings should be received as if they were His own.

Pope Leo not only stresses that unity of Faith is an essential prerequisite for membership in the visible Church founded by Our Lord, but that the *entire* Deposit of Faith must be accepted. Quoting the First Vatican Council, he explains:

All those things are to be believed by divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the written or unwritten word of God, and which are proposed by the Church as divinely revealed, either by solemn definition or in the exercise of its ordinary and universal Magisterium.

Quoting St. Augustine and 2 Corinthians, he rejects as totally unacceptable the possibility that membership in the Church is compatible with the rejection of even one doctrine proposed to us by the Church as divinely revealed:

He who dissents *even in one point* from the divinely revealed truth absolutely rejects all faith, since he thereby refuses to honor God as the supreme truth and the *formal motive of Faith*. "In many things they are with me, in a few things they are not with me; but in those few things in which they are not with me the many things in which they are will not profit them". And this indeed deservedly; for they who take from Christian doctrine what they please lean on their own judgments, not on Faith; and not "bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ", they more truly obey themselves than God. "You, who believe what you like of the gospels and believe not what you like, believe yourselves rather than the gospel".

The literal meaning of the word "heretic" is, of course, "one who chooses".

Union of Members in the Same Sacraments

The third visible bond which unites the Mystical Body is the union of all its members in the same sacraments. In his Apostolic Constitution *Ecclesia Christi* (18 September 1801), Pope Pius VII taught:

All the strength and beauty of this Mystical Body is the union of all its members in the same faith, *in the same sacraments*, in the same bonds of mutual charity, in submission and obedience to the Head of the Church.

This unity is manifested above all in the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist, which is at once both the *sign and the cause* of the unity of the Mystical Body. The Catholic faithful tend to look upon the Eucharist primarily as the Divine Victim Himself, made present among us by the words of consecration spoken by an ordained priest acting in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*) during the Mass. The Divine Victim is first adored, then offered to the Blessed Trinity as an acceptable oblation Who will enable the grace He won for us on the Cross to be distributed to us through the Mass. Participation in the Mass

is essentially a participation in the Sacrifice of Calvary, a participation which is perfected by receiving the Divine Victim in Holy Communion. The reception of Holy Communion tends to be looked upon as the union of the individual soul with the Redeemer. This is all sound Catholic doctrine, and productive of a piety which results in a more intense and profound spirituality for the believer. However, the full Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist goes well beyond this concept. The Scholastic theologians refer to the Sacrament seen primarily as the true Body and Blood of Christ (*veritas corporis — carnis et sanguinis*), as the *sacramentum et res*. But they go beyond this and treat of the *res et non sacramentum*. This refers to the effects of spiritual fruits produced by the sacrifice, i.e., the ultimate end for which It was instituted. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) used the term *res et non sacramentum* in explaining the Eucharist, and taught that its "virtue" (i.e., effect, power) was unity and charity (*virtus unitatis et caritatis*).

Two Levels of Unity

The unity and charity to which the Pope refers exist on two levels—the unity and love between the individual soul and its Creator, to which reference has already been made, and the unity and charity which must exist not simply between the members of the Mystical Body and the Head of the Body, but among the members themselves. The ultimate end for which the Eucharist was instituted can, then, be designated as the increase and the unity of the Mystical Body—the very purposes for which Our Lord founded His one visible Church, which is His Mystical Body. The nature of the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Unity was a favourite theme of the Fathers, and one to which the Sovereign Pontiffs have returned again and again on such occasions as Eucharistic Congresses. Pope Leo XIII cited St. Cyprian upon the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Unity in his encyclical *Mirae caritatis* (28 May 1902):

On this subject St. Cyprian writes: "Finally, this sacrifice of the Lord in itself affirms the universal union of Christians among themselves by firm and indissoluble charity. For when the Lord calls *His Body* the bread made up of many grains, He indicates the union of Our

people; and when He calls *His Blood* the wine made out of thousands of grapes and forming one single liquid, He also designates Our flock formed out of a multitude of different men together”.

In his letter *E Solemnibus*, announcing the Eucharistic Congress to be held in London in 1908, Pope St. Pius X described the Eucharist as follows:

In it is to be found the source whence flows to the whole body of the Church the principle of supernatural life; *in it resides the bond which binds close the members of the Body*. In the august Sacrament, although in a mysteriously hidden manner, Our Loving Redeemer is truly present and living to the end of time. For there is the fire of divine charity; there lies all our hope; there is, for all of us, *one and the same center of faith*”.

In a message to the 9th National Eucharistic Congress of the United States, at St. Paul, Minn., June 26, 1941, Pope Pius XII quoted St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom:

“O Sacrament of tender love! O sign of unity! O bond of charity!” exclaimed St. Augustine. And the zealous Apostle of the Gentiles, whose honoured name your city has borne for just one hundred years, has taught us the divinely inspired truth in these words: “For we, though we may be many, are one bread, one Body, all that partake of one bread”. “For what is the bread?” asks St. John Chrysostom. “The Body of Christ. And what do they become who partake of it? The Body of Christ; not many bodies but one Body . . . There is not one body for thee and another for thy neighbour to be nourished by, but the very same for all”.

The Heart of the Church

There can be little doubt that the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* of Pope Pius XII (June 29, 1943) is the most sublime exposition of the nature of the Mystical Body which has ever been written. Pope Pius refers to the Eucharist as the means by which the union of the Mystical Body “finds as it were its culmination in this mortal life”. The Pope continues:

For Christ the Lord willed that this marvelous union, which can never sufficiently be praised which unites us among ourselves and with our Divine Head, to be shown to the faithful in a special manner by the Eucharistic Sacrifice. For in it the sacred ministers not only take the place of Our Saviour, but they take the place also of the entire Mystical Body and of each one of the faithful. There, too, the faithful themselves, united by common devotion and prayers, offer the Immaculate Lamb made present on the altar by the words of the priest, a most agreeable Victim of praise and propitiation for the needs of the entire Church.

In a radio message addressed to the 6th National Eucharistic Congress of Brazil (August 15, 1953), Pope Pius XII stated that:

The Eucharist was instituted by Christ principally that it might become as it were the Heart of the Church: the center where converge and where are formed into one single Body and one single Soul all the faithful dispersed in every quarter of the globe, and the perennial source whence they draw the nutritive sap of the same divine life . . . all are equally invited to believe, to adore, and to communicate, for all are equally participants in His Body and Blood, all are raised to the same sovereign nobility, *divinae naturae consortes*, "partakers of the divine nature"; so that all will feel themselves to be more than brothers, members of one single Mystical Body of Christ, loving one another affectively and effectively, as if it were Christ Himself.

Inter-Communion a Contradiction

Such quotations from the teaching of the Sovereign Pontiffs could be multiplied almost indefinitely, but those which have been cited here should be more than sufficient to indicate that the Eucharist could never be given to anyone who is not a member of the Mystical Body *without contradicting the nature of the Sacrament*. Even before the Consecration, the bread which has been placed upon the altar signifies the unity of the one body made up of the many grains. Since, as St. Pius X taught, the Eucharist is the source of the supernatural life of the whole Body of the Church, and the bond which binds close the mem-

bers of that body, and one center of faith of that Body, it could not be given to anyone consciously remaining outside the unity of the Church, whether a heretic or schismatic. The fact that heretics and schismatics can be, or almost invariably are, in good faith is totally irrelevant to this vital point of principle. The fact is emphasized in the teaching of St. John Chrysostom, that those who receive the Body of Christ *become what they receive*. Those who intend to remain outside the Mystical Body, no matter how sincere their good faith, cannot under any circumstances *become what they receive*. And, as Pope Leo XIII taught, the rejection of even one divinely revealed truth excludes a person from membership in the Mystical Body.

Holy Communion and the Mass

Furthermore, the reception of Holy Communion cannot be separated from participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Indeed, the reception of Holy Communion is the most perfect manner of participating in the Holy Sacrifice, and, as the Council of Trent expressed it, of gaining "more abundant fruit from the sacrifice". The Mass is the sacrifice of the Mystical Body, every Mass is offered in the name of Christ and the entire Church, even if celebrated by a solitary priest in some distant mission who is authorized to say Mass without a server present. As Pope Pius XII taught in *Mediator Dei*, the Sacred Liturgy "is the whole public worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Head and members". Pope Pius XII has already been quoted to the effect that the members of the Mystical Body offer the Immaculate Lamb through the priest at the altar. Not only do they offer the Divine Victim with the priest but they offer themselves. Pope Pius explains in *Mediator Dei*: "But in the oblation whereby the faithful in this Sacrifice offer the Divine Victim to the heavenly Father, they must do something else; they must also offer themselves as victims". Thus the Mystical Body not only offers the Sacrifice of the Mass but offers itself in that sacrifice. It is indeed, as St. Pius X expressed it, "the bond which binds close the members of the Body".

The Sacrifice of the Mass can only be offered licitly by a priest who is in communion with the Pope, the Vicar of Christ upon earth and visible head of the Mystical Body.

This involves the first of the bonds uniting the Body which have already been cited, i.e., the unity of visible government. (The Masses of schismatic, suspended, excommunicated, or apostate priests are valid but illicit.) Thus, the Sacrifice of the Church cannot be offered by anyone excluded from the visible unity of the Church; and it follows that *those who are excluded from offering the sacrifice are clearly excluded from participating in the fruits of that sacrifice by the reception of Holy Communion*. Offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice and receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist are the exclusive prerogatives of members of the Mystical Body. This fact is attested to not simply by the theological arguments which have just been presented, but by almost two thousand years of uninterrupted Catholic tradition which constitutes the most overwhelming argument it is possible to adduce in favour of the position I have presented. Admission to Holy Communion has been confined to those who are in communion with the Pope. This tradition was broken for the first time in 1967, when Pope Paul VI permitted Miss Barbara Olson, a Presbyterian, to receive Holy Communion at the nuptial Mass when she married a Catholic. Since then the practice has proliferated to the extent that, in 1980, Bishop Frank J. Harrington of the Diocese of Syracuse, U.S.A., gave what amounted to *carte blanche* for Protestants to receive the Catholic Eucharist whenever they feel inclined to do so, the only stipulation being that it ought to be some sort of special occasion. The Syracuse aberration will be examined later, but first it is necessary to examine the legislation governing the practice of what has come to be known as "Eucharistic Hospitality". Both the term "Eucharistic Hospitality" and its implementation in practice are totally alien to the entire Catholic tradition. No precedent for it exists anywhere within the history of the Church. A distinction must be made between "Eucharistic Hospitality" and "inter-communion". Inter-communion involves the mutual and reciprocal sharing of the sacraments of different denominations. The practice is quite common among a number of Protestant sects. The only attempt at initiating inter-communion involving the Catholic Church, which has emerged since Vatican II, was directed at the Orthodox Church. Catholic approaches

to the Orthodox were met with a resounding and humiliating rebuff. The Orthodox consider themselves to be the true Catholics, and the Latin Church to be in schism, and, logically, they refuse to permit access to the Sacrament of Unity to those who are outside what they believe to be the true Church. In May 1973, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America published a document entitled, *Guidelines for Orthodox Christians in Ecumenical Relations*. In this document the Bishops state, as their position, what has always been the unbroken tradition of the Latin Church. What these Orthodox Bishops state is that every Pope up to Pope Paul VI would have stated [and what the present Pope John Paul II has likewise stated.—Ed. *The Remnant*.] They insist that: "unity in faith and the active life of the community is a necessary pre-condition to sharing in the Sacraments of the Orthodox Church". They teach that the Eucharistic Mystery is the end of unity, not a means to that end, and, that: "the decisions regarding Holy Communion reached by bodies outside the Orthodox will have no significance or validity for the Orthodox Church or her members. Holy Communion will not be sought by Orthodox Christians outside of the Church, nor will it be offered to those who do not yet confess the Orthodox Church as their mother".

"Eucharistic Hospitality" Out

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the practices of "Intercommunion" and "Eucharistic hospitality" are incompatible with the concept of a single divinely founded Church, entrusted with the mandate of continuing Christ's mission in this world. As with so many of the other practices which are tearing apart the fabric of the Mystical Body today, the origin of these practices must be located in the post-conciliar liturgical legislation. As I have shown in *Pope Paul's New Mass*, where this legislation introduces a break with tradition it normally cites a document of the Council to justify doing so. However, those who take the trouble to check up the reference cited may well find that the original conciliar document in no way sanctions the innovation (see, for example, Chapter XX, on the Tabernacle).

(To be continued)

This tribute to the now retired Bishop Bernard Steward of Sandhurst is reprinted here, with acknowledgements to *Integrity*, not only as a mark of esteem for a great churchman and friend; but in illustration of what one brave Bishop can do to stem the chaos that has taken hold of the contemporary catechetical chaos within the Church.

Ecce Sacerdos Magnus

FATHER ROBERT E. BURNS

BISHOP Bernard D. Stewart of Sandhurst, Australia, is one of the most outstanding defenders of the Catholic Faith which our age has produced. He is a very outspoken man. He calls a spade a spade, and lets the chips fall as they may. Moreover, he is somewhat unique today in that he assumes personal responsibility for the teaching of catechetics in his Diocese and does not simply delegate this responsibility to others.

In proof of the above, let me quote from his pastoral letter of 1975 entitled: "Instruction in the Catholic Religion in the Schools of the Diocese of Sandhurst". After stressing the fundamental rights and the responsibilities of parents in the religious education of their children, he writes:

"The parish priest is to watch over faith and morals through his parish and especially in schools (Canon 469). he is to see to the catechetical instruction of his people (Canon 1329) through the various stages of their development (Canon 1320). He will visit the parish schools once a week to make sure Christian doctrine is taught properly and he will make suitable provision for religious instruction in other schools".

Of course this is Australia, tell me how it can be applied in the United States of America?

How can a conscientious pastor fulfil the above requirements of canon law when diocesan education bureaucrats dictate to him what textbooks he can and cannot

use? (In most dioceses *Sadlier* is given top priority, but then remember that *Sadlier* employs more educational bureaucrats as consultants than does any other publishing house.)

How can a pastor perform his canonical responsibility when the religious education of his people is taken over by a coordinator, officially appointed by the diocese and well paid? Many of these coordinators in the process of receiving their certification were brainwashed by Modernist teachers.

For example: in recent years Boston College has had more people (mostly nuns) enrolled in the coordinator course than any college in the country. Some 580 were enrolled five years ago when the Jesuit in charge left the priesthood and later married a cenacle nun. Since then, the students have been exposed to the following: Fr. Richard McBrien, Brother Gabriel Moran, Mary Daly, Bernard Cooke (ex-Jesuit from Marquette now married), Gregory Baum (ex-Augustinian now married), and McAfee Brown (a liberal Presbyterian minister noted for his support of one-world government). I wonder what St. Ignatius would think of this assortment of theologians. I know what many helpless pastors think of what has been imposed upon them.

After stressing the importance of Pope Paul's *Credo of the People of God* and the *General Catechetical Directory* issued by Rome the Bishop praises the *Penny Catechism* approved by Australian Bishops, also Sheehan's *Apologistics* (a classic well known in American seminaries in years past). He also recommends Shuster's *Bible Stories* and other books.

He then outlines the fundamental Catholic teachings which must be taught. (This is very similar to Pope Paul's *Credo*.)

The most striking part of this pastoral and the part which, I believe, shows the courage of Bishop Stewart and his great love for the Faith is the section where he names several dozen books and series barred from the Diocese and about a dozen theological and scriptural scholars whose writings are banned and the reason for such given.

Banned are *The Dutch Catechism*, the works of Anth-

ony Bullen, the *Green Bay Series*, *Christ Among Us* (by A. Wilhelm), *Light and Life Series*, *Conscience and Concern* (Di Giacomo), *Infinity Series*, *Discovery Series*, *On Our Way Series*, *Come Alive Series*, *Come to the Father* (Paulist), *Growth in Christ* (Pastorella-Sadlier), *Hi-Time*, *To Live in Christ*, and some others.

Now I quote in toto the most courageous paragraph in this pastoral:

"Among writers whose books or ideas are not to be taught, directly or indirectly, in the schools of the Diocese are: Charles Curran on moral principles and chastity, notably his *Blue Book for Modern Living*; Richard McCormick on *Humanae Vitae*, contraception, or abortion; Piet Schoonenberg on original sin; Raymond Brown on the knowledge of our Blessed Lord, the virginity of our Lady, the Resurrection, the episcopacy; McBrien on chastity; McNeil on chastity; Hans Kung; Gabriel Moran on Revelation; Hubert Richards on the Incarnation; Teilhard de Chardin; Haering on contraception and the *Magisterium*; process theology; Schillebeeckx on the Blessed Eucharist; Gregory Baum on the Church, the Papacy, and contraception". (Where no reasons were given as in the case of Kung and de Chardin, I imagine the Bishop's thinking was that these men are "off base" on so many subjects that it was not necessary to relate all of them.)

Among the catechetical books the Bishop recommends are the following: *The New St. Joseph's Baltimore, a Catechism of Christian Doctrine* (revived by the Bishops of England and Wales), *The Australian Penny Catechism*, *The Word of Truth Series* (Dublin), and *The Truth and Life Series* (Daughters of St. Paul).

I would like to add another series to the list, it is *Know, Love and Serve* by Msgr. Michael McGuire, which I consider one of the best. Msgr. McGuire has given most of his life to catechetics. He is author of *The Revised Baltimore* published back in the '40s. He has spent more than 50 years in the priesthood and recently celebrated his 80th birthday.

What follows is the excerpt from the journal of a Catholic lay Church Worker, who has been working with refugees from El Salvador on the Honduran border. It is his personal account of the events surrounding the aerial bombardment of some 4000 men, women and children as they fled across the Lempa River to Honduras, seeking refugee from the violence in El Salvador. A *New York Times* report for June 8th, 1981 stated that 20 people were confirmed dead and 189 reported missing. Acknowledgements to *The Catholic Worker*.

One More River to Cross

(JOURNAL FROM A REFUGEE CAMP)

LAY CHURCH WORKER

THE waters of the Rio Lempa divide the dry hills of Lempira, Honduras from Cabanas, El Salvador. Waters no wider than a stone's throw across to the shore and just deep enough to reach over the head of a man or woman.

On both sides of the river the hills rise sharply to a crest: cliffs and trees jut out into the water to offer protection from the sun.

Further to the west flow the waters of the Rio Sumpul where, ten months before, 600 refugees fleeing from the repression in Chalatenango, El Salvador, were massacred in the span of six hours by the Salvadorean Security Forces. Honduran troops turned back those refugees who managed to cross the river. Children were thrown up into the air as targets and shot. Women carried babies and children who died in their arms. Few survived. And those who did cannot forget. Esperanza told me this morning she dreamed again of Sumpul. A Salvadorean My Lai.

Who would have believed it! Today, in the Rio Lempa, 4000 refugees crossed over. Wednesday, March 18. In the darkness of the dawn hours they began to cross, cautiously. Now the hills are filled with men, women and children—above all, children. Cries fill the air. Men and women in

the river pass children over their shoulders to the other side. Everywhere shouts, mortar-fire on both sides of the river. Then, in the sky, a helicopter. Shots of machine-gun fire and several sweeps over the river. Unmistakable signs of a Salvadorean helicopter and the Security Forces. Rush to safety behind the cliffs and the trees, then back to the river. Hundreds crossing. Everywhere cries fill the air. A baptism by fire.

Forty Days in the Desert

The Honduran village of La Virtud is situated a few short kilometres from the border of El Salvador. Ten years before, the people here suffered a border war with El Salvador. Now the generals of these two nations have signed a peace treaty. Toasts were drunk last November in the Organization of American States (OAS). But the reality is different. Here the only peace one encounters is the peace with which the armies of both countries collaborate in their war against the refugees from El Salvador.

Since September, more than 11,000 Salvadorean refugees have crossed over the river to the hills and villages of the municipality of La Virtud. The town itself has more than doubled its size to 3000. Now with the new arrivals the number of Salvadorean refugees in the region approaches 15,000—nearly half the total number in Honduras.

Just to climb over the dusty rocks and pass through the hills evokes a Biblical landscape: the dry dusty earth, ageless and monotonous rocks, trees jutting out of the stone to offer occasional shade, and the trickling water of a stream to give relief to our thirst. One thinks of Abraham: "Go, leave your family, to a land that I will show you".

Here, the simplest tasks of the day require a journey through the rocks and hills—to gather food or water, to carry this child to the clinic, or to gather to celebrate the Word of God. This is the daily bread of the refugees. Everywhere the impression is of a people on the march, in procession, just to survive, and with the hope to reach a promised land, to return to a land from exile. A people formed in the desert, in the wilderness and on march toward their liberation.

The Day Before the Crossing

We set out for the hills. Everywhere — here as well as throughout the continent — people are preparing for the anniversary of the death of Bishop Romero. In each village novenas are celebrated each night, nine days of preparation before the final day: Songs from the *Misa Popular* (Popular Mass), testimonies and remembrances of Bishop Romero, readings from his homilies. A whole people remember their forty days in the wilderness as they relive the passion and death of their nation expressed in the life of their beloved *companero*, looking toward a day of liberation.

It is the time of *Cuaresma*—Lent—forty days which take on vivid proportions here, both in the transformation of the landscape with the approaching rains, as well as in the transformation of an entire people.

Daily news comes from El Salvador with the arrival of new refugees. Today for the third day, there are bombings in the distance. We can sight planes just on the other side of the mountains and hear the resounding explosions. People gather in groups to watch and recall the names of villages over which the bombs fall: Arcato, Nombra de Jesus, San Antonio. Reports of movements of Honduran troops toward the border fill the air. Just this morning a soldier informs us they have been in radio contact with the Salvadorean Security Forces on the other side. Thousands of refugees are in flight from the bombings. People begin to speak of another Rio Sumpul.

Now, one week before the celebration of the 24th, we gather in the evening with the refugees, a stone's throw from the mountain which marks the border. On the other side is the village from which they have come over the last six months, a morning's walk in better days. By the light of the lantern a woman leads us in prayer. We listen to the homily of Bishop Romero given one year before.

The voice is unmistakable: "Poverty is the force of liberation. It is a denunciation, a spirit, a commitment." The people listen with conviction. "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven." There is joy in his voice as he announces the great hope, the joy that the people share for knowing that his hope is theirs, that this word is addressed to each one, the great mass of poor which is El Salvador.

Return to the River

The day after the crossing we decide to return to the river to investigate, to look for survivors. To return, just to return. Something happened here which we still cannot believe. The return is more difficult. By now the Honduran soldiers have mobilized. We are checked every hundred yards along the way — negotiating, displaying passports, searching bags and possessions. We travel as a "Commission", as journalists, and are able to pass. At the last checkpoint the soldiers inform us that they are prohibited to go any further and we travel at our own risk.

We approach the river with great anticipation. What will we encounter? And who? The dead? The missing? Those who have managed to cross the river and save themselves?

Along the way we see unmistakable signs of the battle the day before: rocks piled up in circles like miniature caves behind which the people and children hid from the helicopter fire. Huge holes gape in the ground where the mortar fell. On Honduran territory! There is no mistake. I reach down and pick up the lead fragments of the mortar.

Suddenly somebody shouts out ahead. "We've found somebody! He's alive!" As we approach we find an old man, the grey in his hair and the features on his face show 80 or 90 years of age. He can hardly speak for fear and exhaustion. He lies still by the tree. Someone from his village recognizes him. "That's Don Felipe!"

A little further toward the river we encounter more refugees: three women and their children. What a joy! A little further on we find a small child, four years old, lying still on the rocks. Her mother brings us closer, and turns the child over. She cries out in pain. Half of her back-side is torn away, infested with flies and dirt. Her mother informs us it was a helicopter which did it. "Animales" the people say to refer to helicopters and planes.

"Salvador!" Another man who is with us cries out his son's name. "Salvador!" He is looking for his ten year old child who did not cross over. We have to restrain him to prevent him from crossing back. "Salvador!" he cries again. "Salvador!"

The return home is sombre. Exhaustion and the heat of the day subdue us. Over our shoulders we carry the old

man and the little girl in hammocks. The soldiers stop and search us and let us pass. At one stop I call out for water for the little girl. No one responds. Then a soldier steps up and offers some water from his canteen. The little girl drinks thirstily. The soldier, no more than 20, looks like so many of the peasants here. The woman next to me urges me to drink too. I am unable.

Finally we arrive at the camp. A makeshift clinic has been set up to attend to the refugees. Someone attends to the little girl. The old man rests in the shade. Next to me a mother feeds her child through a medicine dropper. On a cot another child receives nourishment intravenously. His belly is extended, his ribs pronounced, his eyes stare out into the distance. I reach out to touch his forehead. By morning both children are dead.

A Day in the Camp

The daily life of the camp is impressive. Day begins at 4.30 with the first signs of dawn. As far as we can see, people are stretched out on the hard rock ground with nothing more than the clothes on their back. Here and there fires dot the ocean of people. Everywhere the cries of tiny infants. Already people are hard at work looking for firewood, grinding corn, washing clothes in the river and bearing water. Everyone who can walk works, from the youngest child to the oldest grandmother. Women returning from the river form an impressive sight, bearing water on their heads, while men as well, machetes in hand, bear loads of firewood on their shoulders.

"We're workers", says one, his worn face and hands testifying to his words. "We want to plant a *milpa* — a cornfield". The crowd of men who have gathered around all agree. The creativity, the industry, the pride and joy of work is evident in the activity around us. "*Somos trabajadores*", he says. "We're workers."

The dimensions of faith of the refugees is profound. "*Primero Dios!*" Above and before all, God. Everywhere you hear this, almost as a greeting. "*Primero Dios!*" This is the only way people can explain what happened. Their gratitude is profound. "God is all-powerful", says another. No one can match God's power, not even the Honduran Army, not even the Salvadorean Security Forces. How else

to explain it? In the span of one day, 4,000 refugees, the majority of them women and children, pass through the river with a minimum of deaths! Two dead, 11 drowned, many still missing on the other side of the river. But 4,000 passed over!

One man explained it to me in terms of the flight from Egypt and the passage through the Red Sea. God divided the waters to allow us to pass through. There is no other explanation. Four days they fled the bombings, day and night without food. By the time they reached the river, the Salvadorean Security Forces were only one kilometer behind. The popular forces provided cover and time for the refugees to cross. And only the night before the Honduran troops had departed from the other side of the river. "God is all-powerful!" "An arm strong and mighty!"

But the reality is much more grim. Most of the refugees have been in flight since August of the previous year, nearly nine months on the run, fleeing from the repression and the bombings: 500 pound bombs, incendiary bombs, napalm. Nine months in flight: men, pregnant women with babes in their arms, young children, and the old and lame. Each night a different spot. Days without food or water. And always the fear. "How long have you been in flight?" I ask others. "Two years". "Three years". There is no end to this testimony of suffering, this Calvary, it seems.

But there is peace here. The peace the world cannot give. The peace the people nourish in their hearts that God is leading them through the desert and that one day — "*Primero Dios!*"—they will reach the promised land and return to El Salvador. Free at last. Theirs is the hope of the Psalmist: "Those who sow in tears, carrying the seed! Will return with joy to reap, bearing the sheaves."

Songs of Liberation

Tonight marks the end of the fifth day here. Already there is a little more security and food here. The night again is clear. The stars are brillians, and the moon rises over the mountains. Here and there fires dot the landscape. People are asleep.

Suddenly, voices break the silence. Then music. It is the eve of the celebration of Bishop Romero, an event to take place throughout the continent. The popular forces in El

Salvador have declared a day of cease-fire in commemoration. Throughout El Salvador church bells will ring at 6 p.m.

The songs continue with more from the *Misa Popular*:

"Come, all of us together

To the banquet

To the table of creation."

The words recall the life of Rutilio Grande, killed in 1977. Here at the table of creation, all are equal, all will eat together and share the goods of creation . . .

The hope and joy of these refugees is as profound as the Calvary through which they are passing and as certain as the day of liberation which approaches.

Rebuilding Houses to Live In

Today, nine days after the crossing, the first hundred men left the camp, walking an hour to reach La Virtud. It is the first time since crossing the river that permission has been given to leave the camp. Today will mark the first day of building shelters for the refugees to live in. Here in La Virtud there will be more security, they say, further from the border.

Below us lies a huge cornfield, fallow and surrounded on one side by a river. We climb down the hillside to begin the work of clearing the stubble away from the earth, hauling lumber and constructing simple tent-shelters. The work is long and hard beneath the hot sun, but there is a spirit of joy and cooperation to be able to work again.

I stop to rest beneath a tree. An old man, his face worn and tired, looks up at me and smiles through his toothless mouth: ". . . when they mistreat and persecute you." He stops to scratch his head, trying to remember a few words. Then he smiles, "Blessed are you when they mistreat and persecute you . . . for you will be rewarded." I smile in return . . .

Today in the refugee camp the first child was born. Healthy and full of life, they say. Looking over the field and the work, there is a sign here of a new day . . . a day of liberation for the masses of poor, the peasants and workers in El Salvador who will inherit the land of their ancestors, as God promised.

The Editor of *Social Survey*, our Australian contemporary, sums up very briefly the present position of Marxism in today's world. Despite its major impact ideologically, it has failed to produce the type of just society hoped for by so many. This article serves as an introduction to the very important published letter of the Jesuit General, Father Pedro Arrupe, to the Jesuit Provincials of Latin America and for the information of other Jesuit Superiors.

The Decline of Marxism

W. G. SMITH, S.J.

CLEARLY, Marxism, in its several versions, has had a major impact on the modern world; but it certainly has not had the impact that Karl Marx thought it would have. Marx believed that he had discovered the key to a scientific understanding of history, and the same belief was held by his early followers and by those later "Marxists" who felt that the system needed only to be tinkered with somewhat before it would produce the desired result.

Inevitability

The heart of the matter, for Marx, was that history was moving inevitably to the overthrow of the capitalist system of production of goods and services and its replacement by a system of common ownership of the means of production. This new system would ensure that production would be for all people, not for the profit of a few, that the workers of the world, the proletariat, would be liberated from the bondage imposed by the capitalist system, and would enjoy a condition of peace and growing prosperity, a prosperity that the old system could not give them.

While the process was inevitable, the workers in industrialized countries would contribute to the change of systems when they recognized the essential fact that the working class had to struggle against, and bring about the overthrow of, the property-owning class.

The Appeal of Marxism

To some of the people who were suffering injustice in the form of economic exploitation, and to some of the idealists and intellectuals who observed this injustice with anger, the Marxist proposition had the appeal of a simple and universal solution to the world's problems. Here was the right, the inescapable, means not only for understanding society, but for changing it for the best. No longer need sufferers and sympathisers stand appalled by the massive difficulties obstructing the introduction of a just society. Rather, the just society was in the near future, coming closer all the time, and its advent could even be hastened. Any action that would hasten that coming was good.

The reality, of course, has been different from the forecast. Prosperity and respect for human rights are the experience of the majority of people in the industrialized non-Marxist countries. The new, just, materially prosperous society promised by Marx has not been produced anywhere by a successful class war waged by an industrial proletariat against their capitalist masters. What has been imposed in a number of countries by men who claimed to be inspired by Marx's ideas and who certainly used them is a system that has proved itself to be incapable of economic efficiency and high productivity, that is plagued by chronic food shortages, widespread corruption, cheating, slave labour and incredible cruelty. In this system, Marxism is now used merely to justify and prolong the savage rule of a small group which is in control and which is prepared to use any means to stay in power; "to defend the revolution", as they put it.

The Future

The classic example of these evils is found in Russia, which was hailed in the 30's by some Western intellectuals as the land where they had seen the future and that it worked—at a time when the starvation, the killing and the slave labour camps were already in full swing. Russia does not stand alone, however, for China has been revealed in the same light in recent times. The recent history of Poland has brought to the world's attention another country made bankrupt under Marxist rule and kept in the Marxist fold only by the power of the Russian army. The same is pat-

ently obvious in the case of the other Russian satellites. The Marxist regimes overseas are also maintained only by force.

In other words, the system has been an appalling failure wherever it has been introduced; but unfortunately, there is great difficulty in getting rid of it.

In spite of all this experience, there are some, outside of the communist countries, who still want to give the Marxist system another try. They seem to believe that they and their associates will succeed where no one else has and will introduce Marxism with a "human face". (There are others, of course, who see it merely as a tool for gaining, extending and keeping power. These are the realists.) The former are driven by the sight of great numbers of people caught in oppression and inhuman life patterns, and they want to do something for them as quickly as possible. They hear the claim of Marxists that Marxism really does offer a quick solution, they know no other way of succeeding, and so they turn aside from what is going on in the Marxist countries and look only at the need of people in their own. They are doomed to failure because of the fatal factors in Marxism — centralization of power, the belief that any action is morally lawful if it promotes the revolution, and the subordination of human life and values to the search for material prosperity.

The Jesuit General

Fr. Arrupe, in his letter (which follows) to the Provincial Superiors of Latin America, is not dealing with these latter cases, or with people who accept Marxism fully. His purpose is to answer a question that "is specific and limited : can a Christian, a Jesuit, adopt Marxist analysis, as long as he distinguishes it from Marxist philosophy or ideology, and also from Marxist praxis, at least considered in its totality ?"

Fr. Arrupe's article is clear and important. His conclusion is that Jesuits cannot adopt as a means of analysing society "not just some elements or some methodological insights, but Marxist analysis as a whole". He adds that Marxist analysis "certainly cannot be offered to (young Jesuits) during formation as a basis to understand reality".

In comparatively recent years, it has not been uncommon to meet Catholics who have no problem about calling themselves Marxists and following a good part of Marx's teaching about society and the way to reform it. Others cannot reconcile this approach with the demands of Catholic doctrine. Others are frankly puzzled.

In the following circular letter, addressed to the Jesuit Provincials of Latin America and for information to other Jesuit Superiors, the General of the Society discusses whether it is appropriate for Jesuits to use the Marxist technique of social analysis.

Problems of Marxist Analysis

PEDRO ARRUPÉ, S.J.

LAST year, you requested my help in discussing at greater depth the problem of "marxist analysis", on which the Bishops of Latin America had just published important guidelines (Puebla Document, nn. 544-545). This letter, based on wide consultation, attempts to meet your request. I am also sending a copy of it to other Provincials of the Society, since I believe it will be of service to some of them as well.

I shall not deal with the whole problem of the relationship between Marxism and Christianity. This is too large a theme, and it has already been developed in many documents, both of the Sovereign Pontiffs and of several Episcopal Conferences. The question I shall treat is more specific and limited: can a Christian, a Jesuit, adopt marxist analysis, as long as he distinguishes it from Marxist philosophy or ideology, and also from marxist praxis, at least considered in its totality?

Guidelines and Directives

The first thing to note in this question is that not everybody understands the same thing by the words "marxist analysis". Whenever the expression is used, it is necessary to seek a precise explanation of its content. In addition, there are aspects of this problem, sociological or even philosophical, which are outside my competence as Superior General. However, bearing in mind the way the question is generally raised today, I have no hesitation in offering some guidelines and directives which are needed for the good government of the Society as an apostolic body.

I am well aware that some may not recognize themselves right away in the question : "Can a Christian adopt marxist analysis as his own ?" This is the way I have often heard it expressed in your Provinces. But there are some Jesuits, few enough in Latin America, but more in some European countries, who find themselves immersed straightaway in an atmosphere of convinced Marxism and sometimes of long marxist tradition. For example, some priest workers feel that, for the sake of inculturation and solidarity, they cannot avoid sharing a number of viewpoints in common with their fellow workers. It is only out of such a situation that they enter into a faith discernment to which, moreover, they attach great importance. They note that it is often a far cry from theoretical Marxism to the actual behaviour and attitudes of the marxist workers. Thus, they put us on guard against giving too much weight to the intellectual aspects of the problem. These observations are very helpful. However, we must acknowledge that, even in a more intuitive type of faith discernment, problems continue to arise here. And so, in the case of the priest workers as well, the guidelines given here are important.

The Analysis of Society

First, it seems to me that, in our analysis of society, we can accept a certain number of methodological viewpoints which, to a greater or lesser extent, arise from marxist analysis, as long as we do not attribute an exclusive character to them. For instance, an attention to economic factors, to property structures, to economic interests which motivate this or that group; or again, a sensitivity to the

exploitation that victimizes entire classes, attention to the role of the class struggle in history (at least, of many societies), attention to ideologies which can camouflage for vested interests and even for injustice.

In practice, however, the adoption of marxist analysis is rarely the adoption of only a method or an "approach". Usually, it means accepting the substance of the explanations Marx provided for the social reality of his time and applying them to that of our time. And so we come to our first observation: in the area of social analysis, we cannot admit any *a priori*. There is room for hypotheses and theories, but everything should be verified, nothing can be presupposed. Now, it can happen that someone will adopt a marxist analysis, or elements of it, as a set of *a priori* principles which need no verification, but, at the most, some illustration. At times, these are identified in an unwarranted way with an evangelical option for the poor. They certainly do not flow directly from the Gospel. In matters of sociological and economic interpretation, we Jesuits must carefully verify facts and be outstanding in our efforts at objectivity.

The Heart of the Question

We come now to the heart of the question: can one accept the set of explanations that constitute marxist analysis without subscribing to marxist philosophy, marxist ideology, marxist politics? To answer this question, we must bear some important points in mind.

According to a good number of Christians who are themselves sympathetic to marxist analysis, even if it does not imply either "dialectical materialism" or *a fortiori*, atheism, it nonetheless encompasses "historical materialism" and, in the view of some, is even identical with it. All social reality, therefore, including the political, the cultural, the religious and the area of conscience, is seen to be determined by the economic factor. Admittedly, even in Marxism itself, the terms thus employed are poorly defined and open to a variety of interpretations. However, historical materialism is most frequently understood in a reductionist sense. Politics, culture, religion lose their own substance and are perceived only as realities wholly dependent on that which occurs in the sphere of economic

relations. This view of reality is prejudicial to Christian faith, at least to the Christian concept of man and to Christian ethics. Thus, even if it remains true that we Christians should be particularly attentive to economic factors in every account we give of social reality, we must keep our distance from an analysis which entails the idea of economic determination in this reductionist sense.

Belief is Left Fragile

Furthermore, a criticism of religion and of Christianity is connected with historical materialism, and marxist analysis generally does not succeed in freeing itself from it. Of course, such a criticism can have the effect of opening our eyes to cases in which the abuse of religion conceals situations that are socially indefensible. Nevertheless, if one's reasoning assumes that everything is intimately a function of productive relations, as if these determined reality, then the content of religion and Christianity is very quickly relativized and diminished. Belief in God the Creator and in Jesus Christ the Saviour is left fragile, or at least regarded as serving no useful purpose. A sense of gratuity gives way to that of utility. Christian hope tends to become unreal.

Sometimes, an attempt is made to distinguish direct faith in Jesus Christ Himself, to be preserved, from its various concrete doctrinal and social expressions which do not survive the onslaught of such an analysis. But then, the danger often arises of a radical criticism of the Church, quite beyond the limits of appropriate fraternal correction within the *Ecclesia semper reformanda* [the Church which must undergo perpetual reform]. At times, there even appears a tendency to judge the Church as if from the outside, and even to refuse any longer to recognize it as the true source of one's faith. In this way, it is not of rare occurrence that the adoption of marxist analysis leads to judgements about the Church which are extremely severe and even unjust.

The Class Struggle

Even in cases where it is not taken as implying a rigorous historical materialism, marxist social analysis contains as an essential element a radical theory of antagonism and class struggle. It is no exaggeration to say that it is social

analysis in function of the class struggle. The fact of antagonism and class struggles should be realistically and fully recognized—the Christian sees here some relationship between this evil and sin. It should not, however, be generalized. It has nowhere been proved that all human history, past and present, can be reduced to a struggle, still less to a class struggle in the precise meaning of the expression. Social reality cannot be understood solely in light of the master-slave dialectic: there have been and still are other factors in human history — alliance, peace, love — other deep forces which influence it.

We must also take note here of the fact that marxist analysis often does not remain mere analysis, but leads to action programs and strategies. Recognition of the class struggle does not necessarily imply that the means to end it should also be a struggle—that between the working class and the bourgeoisie. But it often happens that those who adopt the analysis, also adopt this strategy. And such a strategy cannot be fully understood apart from the messianic role of the proletariat which belongs to Marx's ideology and already formed part of his philosophy before he undertook his systematic economic analysis. In addition, even when Christians recognize the legitimacy of certain struggles and do not exclude revolution in situations of extreme tyranny that have no other solution (cfr. Paul VI, *The Development of Peoples*, n. 31), they cannot accept that the privileged method for ending struggle is struggle itself. They will rather seek to promote other methods of social transformation, calling for persuasion, witness, reconciliation, and never losing hope in conversion. Only as a means of last resort will they have recourse to struggle, especially if it involves violence, in order to combat injustice. There is a whole philosophy—and for us, theology—of action that is at stake here.

Contradiction

In brief, although marxist analysis does not directly imply acceptance of marxist philosophy as a whole—and still less of dialectical materialism as such—as it is normally understood, it implies in fact a concept of human history in contradiction with the Christian view of man and society and leading to strategies which threaten Christian values

and attitudes. The consequences have often been disastrous, even though perhaps not always nor immediately. Christians who have for a time attempted to adopt marxist analysis and praxis have confessed they have been led bit by bit to accept any means to justify the end. There are many instances which still corroborate what Paul VI wrote in *Octogesima Adveniens* (n. 34): "It would be illusory and dangerous . . . to accept the elements of marxist analysis without recognizing their relationships with ideology". To separate one from the other is more difficult than is sometimes imagined.

In this context, the Bishops of Latin America meeting at Puebla noted that theological reflection based on marxist analysis runs the risk of leading "to the total politicization of Christian existence, the disintegration of the language of faith into that of the social sciences, and the draining away of the transcendental dimension of Christian salvation" (Puebla, n. 545). This triple risk becomes evident in light of the observations I have just made.

Real Danger

To adopt, therefore, not just some elements or some methodological insights, but marxist analysis as a whole, is something we cannot accept. Even supposing someone, with a whole series of careful distinctions, could legitimately speak of marxist analysis without accepting a reductive historical materialism or the theory and strategy of a generalized class struggle — but would this still be marxist analysis? — most people, including the majority of Jesuits, would be incapable of doing this. So there is real danger in defending the position that it is possible to undertake a marxist analysis separate from its philosophy, ideology or political praxis. This is all the more true in that, with a few exceptions, Marxists themselves reject any separation between the analysis and marxist world view of principles of action. We have to make this practical discernment, as well as the theoretical one. We must, however, give young Jesuits in training instruments for critical study and serious Christian reflection so that they can understand the problems of marxist analysis. This analysis certainly cannot be offered them during formation as a basis to understand reality.

Property

I wish to mention another point which I would like our specialists to study in greater depth. It is the question of property structures (specifically, the means of production) which occupy such a key position in marxist analysis. There is no doubt that a bad distribution of property, uncompensated by other factors, leads to and facilitates the exploitation pointed out by Marx and also denounced by the Church. All the same, is not the institute of property itself confused with its bad distribution? It is important to continue investigating, with the help of experience, what forms of distribution of property rights, as of other powers (political, trade union, etc.), will bring about greater justice and more development for all people in different types of societies. Far from forgetting the contribution of the Church's social teaching in this practical field, we should study it in greater depth, work out its applications and help in its development.

Four Observations

Finally, before concluding, I would like to make four observations. *Firstly*, whatever the reservations with regard to marxist analysis, we should always understand well and appreciate the reasons that make it attractive. Christians readily and rightly sympathize with the aim and ideal of liberating mankind from domination and oppression, of doing the truth while condemning the ideologies that conceal it, of ending class divisions. What we cannot admit is that this can be achieved by means that are facile or in contradiction with the final aim; but neither can we ever allow ourselves to be discouraged in the continuing quest for these objectives, for they are intimately related to the charity that characterizes the Christian enterprise. Besides, we must have compassion for those who are suffering in their own flesh the degradation of social injustices.

Materialism

In the second place, it should be very clear that, in our day, marxist analysis is not unique in being affected by ideological or philosophical pre-suppositions that have permeated its system. In particular, the type of social analysis used in the liberal world today implies an individ-

ualistic and materialistic vision of life that is destructive of Christian values and attitudes. In this connection, are we giving enough attention to the content of textbooks used in our schools? In using elements of social analysis, of whatever type, if we want to remain faithful to the Gospel, we must be critical of them, trying always to purify them before selecting what genuinely helps us to understand and describe without prejudice existing reality. Our efforts should be guided by the criteria of the Gospel, not by ideologies incompatible with it.

Cooperation

Thirdly, as regards Marxists themselves, we should remain fraternally open to dialogue with them. However, true to the spirit of *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, (Vatican II, n. 21, para. 6), we ought not to refuse practical cooperation in concrete cases where the common good seems to call for it (cfr. *Mater et Magistra*, s. IV). Naturally, we must keep in mind our own special role as priests and religious, and never act like lone rangers in our dealings with the Christian community and its responsible leaders. We must ensure that any collaboration on our part is only concerned with activities acceptable to a Christian. In this whole area, we have always the obligation to maintain our own identity; because we accept some points of view that are valid, we should not allow ourselves to be carried as far as approval of the analysis in its totality; we must act in accordance with our faith and the principle of action that it inspires. So let us behave in such a way that Christianity can be seen to be a message that has greater value for humankind than any concept, however useful, of marxist analysis.

Finally, we should also firmly oppose the efforts of anyone who wishes to take advantage of our reservations about marxist analysis in order to condemn as marxist or communist, or at least to minimize esteem for, a commitment to justice and the cause of the poor, the defence of their rights against those who exploit them, the urging of legitimate claims. Have we not often seen forms of anti-communism that are nothing but means for concealing injustice? In this respect, as well, let us remain true to

ourselves and not permit anyone to exploit our critical assessment of Marxism and marxist analysis.

I ask you all to act with limpid clarity and fidelity. I ask you to strive with all your energy, in the context of our vocation, on behalf of the poor and against injustice, but without allowing indignation to obscure your vision of the faith, and maintaining always, even in the heat of conflict, a Christian attitude that is characterized by love and not hardness of heart.

* * * *

To conclude: I appreciate that the presentation of marxist analysis may eventually be modified on one point or another in the future (cfr. *Peace on Earth*, s. V). Besides, there is still room for further theoretical studies and empirical investigations concerning the various problems on which I have touched. At the present moment, I want everyone to observe the indications and directives contained in this letter. I hope it will allow you and other superiors to help more effectively those Jesuits whose ministry puts them in contact with men and women of marxist conviction, among whom I include those Christians who refer to themselves as "Christian Marxists". More generally, I hope this letter will help all Jesuits who feel the need to analyse society and cannot avoid facing the problem of marxist analysis. Along these lines, we can do better work in the promotion of justice which is inseparable from our service of the faith.

DAY TO REMEMBER

May I draw the attention of readers to the Public Meeting on February 20th and which is advertised on the inside and outside of the back cover of this issue of *Christian Order*?

I believe it is of vital importance that every reader of *Christian Order* should do his or her utmost to be present. I ask you to come at no matter what cost to yourselves; to stand firm with the rest of us for the Faith of Our Fathers. Much is at stake. Please be there.

—Paul Crane, S.J.

Fr. Crane takes as his cue for what follows a sentence from *The Pope's Divisions* (Faber; £10.00) by Peter Nichols, the Rome correspondent of *The Times*. Disagreeing with Nichols as to the primary purpose of the Church, he defines what it really is and shows how much of the confusion within the Church today flows from a misunderstanding of this purpose.

CURRENT COMMENT

Authority: Substance and Form

THE EDITOR

REFERRING to the Vatican on page 109 of this entertaining if, in some ways, superficial book, Peter Nichols writes: "So many certainties need looking at again if this complete embodiment of the institutional nature of religion is to reach the second millenium as protagonist of the self-completion of mankind, and not a confusing element in the choice of right and wrong".

The Primary Purpose of the Church

One asks at once whether the *primary purpose* of the Vatican and the the Church it governs is, in fact, the self-completion of mankind. The answer has to be in the negative and I believe myself that the lack of balance, the misplacement of emphasis on the secular which runs through this book originates in the Author's failure to appreciate what the primary purpose of the Church really and truly is. It is *not* the self-fulfilment of man. It is the fulfilment of God's word in man's regard, as entrusted to the Church by God's Son. Her primary concern is the salvation of men, which is for those who hold to God's word; and His word is His truth given to men by His Son

and entrusted on their account to His Church as the means essential to their salvation. They are to hold to the truth and seek the strength to do so through prayer and the Sacraments; which it is the business of the Church to make available to them.

With respect to Peter Nichols, the Catholic Church, as such, is not "a confusing element in the choice of right and wrong". Holding up the truth publicly and before all men, she offers them the only sure way to their choice of that which is right and in which alone true freedom from confusion is found to lie. The Church is indeed "protagonist of the self-completion of mankind", but not in the way Nichols would appear to have her be. For self-completion—or fulfilment as I call it—is not something to be sought by men direct, for its own sake and on their terms, with the Church assenting to their choice, canonizing, as it were, the mood of the moment, irrespective of its truth, as the neo-Modernist would have her do. Not so. Fulfilment is essentially a by-product; the calm-steadiness in well-doing that comes to those who set their lives by God's law irrespective of the consequences. Self-completion is not something to be sought direct by men on their terms. It comes only, and by way of by-product, to those who serve God on His. Peter Nichols' dychotomy, I am afraid, is misplaced. Implicit in it is a false assumption. The Church is not a bar to the self-completion of men because she holds to the truth. The exact opposite is the case. By so doing, in fact, she offers them the only means of achieving it. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things will be added unto you". These words are for all time.

I do not think there is a scrap of malice in Nichols' words that I quoted at the outset of this article. On the contrary. I did so because the contradiction which appears to me as implicit in them points to a line of thinking common enough in liberal circles within the contemporary Church and which, I would say, has strongly affected him. This sees her progress amongst men in terms of her ability to accommodate her thinking to the prevailing mood, irrespective more or less of its truth. For Nichols and those whose opinions he shares, the confusion that prevails today within the Church is due to what they would think of as

her rigidity in matters of doctrinal and moral teaching and practice. In fact, the exact opposite is the case: confusion will be cleared from the minds of Catholics and assurance restored, precisely to the extent that they are brought to adhere rigidly — which is a very different thing from “woodenly” — to the truth consigned to her by Christ on man’s account. The difference between these two points of view is profound. It explains why the remedies for the current confusion suggested by Nichols in his book appear so often as the exact opposite of those which should be put forward. Authority is a case in point.

Authority, Democracy and Faith

There are many in the Church today—and Nichols who is not a Catholic would appear to be with them in this—who look to a dilution of papal authority, not only as a means to the restoration of peace and unity within the Church, but as a step that must be taken in the interests of what they think of as true ecumenism. The primacy of the Pope—to say nothing of papal infallibility—is seen as a stumbling block on the ecumenical way. Where they are concerned its removal is imperative. The liberal Catholic call, then, for what they call democracy within the Church has been insistent since the Second Vatican Council. Implicit in it is a further call for the dilution of doctrine; again, to suit the prevailing mood in the interests of so-called peace and unity. The thought behind this is of truth as made by man, not as received from God; something, therefore, that can be shifted or altered as circumstances require. The contrast is stark. On the one hand, truth as man-made, the product of popular consensus, relative to time and place and popular need. On the other, truth as God-given, of its nature received and not made; absolute, therefore, and unalterable, demanding—again by reason of its nature—transmission through hierarchial authority. The clash here is clear; a clash of opposites—expressed, for example, by Nichols’ relief at the passing of the “authoritarianism” of Pope Pius XII and the coming of what he thinks of as the more “democratic” approach of Popes John and Paul VI; followed, in the relevant pages of his book, by the scarcely disguised wariness of his approach to Pope John Paul II whom he appears to see as the progenitor of a new

authoritarian age within the Church; the "Polish Hussar", as he calls him, riding roughshod over the patient "liberalizing" work of his immediate predecessors.

Unity only in Faith

Again, let me remind the reader that, if Nichols' assumption is correct, his conclusion with regard to Pope John Paul is entirely logical. If truth is relative—something to be diluted to suit prevailing mood—then those who hold it up as a God-given absolute and call on men to obey it as such and follow it are, in fact, little more than wreckers of the liberal dream, which sees unity as consensus at the convenient level of a lowest common denominator. Once again, the opposite is the case. Far from splintering unity by proclaiming absolute truth and calling on men to obey it, Pope John Paul is showing them the only way forward that can lead to unity in freedom and which is found in adherence to absolute truth. But this, I am afraid, is what Catholic Progressives—and, indeed, Nichols himself—do not appear to be able to see.

Authority: Substance and Style

It could well be that the reason for this is to be found in the fact that, so very often in the past in the Church, as elsewhere, the style and manner of authority, the mode of its exercise, has been wrong. If this is the case, then it would appear that Nichols and his progressive Catholic friends have confused substance with form (or style), seeing the dilution—sometimes to near-abolition—of the former as remedy for the abuse of the latter. The mistake here is illogical and elementary, but it is common enough. Neither can it be denied for a single moment that there has been abuse of authority by those who have exercised it at most levels within the Church; also, that its whole style in the not-too-distant past has been such as to repel, in many instances, rather than attract those for whose benefit—not disedification—its exercise is designed. Within this context, one thinks, for example, of the unwanted and unwarranted pomp and circumstance that surrounded the office of Bishop or Religious Superior in the not too distant past; their unapproachability and the arbitrariness and insensi-

tivity that attended many of their judgments. Catholics have lived for long under this sort of regime and were content to do so because they belonged to a conforming age. These words are not used derogatively; as the saying goes, Catholics "took authority for granted", conformed to it on the whole, and proceeded on their way. I am using hindsight here and I am perfectly aware that hindsight is the prerogative of the fool. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the exercise of authority, if it is to be effective in any age, must take into account the altered attitudes—so many of them so very good—of the times in which we live. That extremely far-seeing police officer, the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, showed himself as brilliantly aware of this in an interview he gave to the *Times* in the Autumn of last year. Society's problems, he said, were not solved through the abolition of authority or through its outmoded exercise. What was needed was recognition of the need for an alteration of its style to suit the mores of the moment. The substance had to remain. It is the same within the Church.

Remoteness of the Roman Curia

Here, a good many Catholic Traditionalists tend to be their own worst enemies. As I have remarked before in these pages, they tend to confuse adherence to the truth with the manners and the mores that surrounded its upholding in what they think of as "the good old days". Where the Vatican itself is concerned their sigh is for the ostrich plumes and the triple tiara; the whole panoply of papal power without reference to its setting and with too little consideration of the manner of its exercise; its remoteness from so many. Within this context, the Roman Curia—as distinct from Pope John Paul—remains a case in point. Where it is concerned, I found Nichols at his perceptive and descriptive best. The impression his pages convey is, I feel, quite right. It is of self-containment—from which Pope Paul tried to rescue his Curia without, one feels, any real success; for which one does not blame him, for he was confronted with an appalling task. The Roman Curia suffers, as just about all bureaucracies do, from the tendency to turn itself into a world of its own, the main purpose of whose existence is that it should continue to

exist. It is important to realise that its extrication from the outlook which breeds this approach to life will be a very long and difficult business. It will not be accomplished overnight. Yet, somehow, it must be done, for one can feel the remoteness of the Roman Curia from the members of the Church as one turns the pages of Nichols' chapters devoted to it. Hope comes when one realises that it is not here—at the structured top of the Church—that one should look *primarily* for that altered style in the exercise of authority that must come if it is to be effectively wielded in this day and age.

Reblossoming from the Grass Roots

One must look, rather, at the bottom; seeing the reblossoming of true authority within the Church as something that must grow from the roots up; as a matter primarily of a new rapport between priests and people. There is an ease that must come here, a simplicity—a total absence of pomp and circumstance—that will bind priest and people close to each other in the only way in which they can be so bound; in Christ. The priest, indeed, is special—because of his task to offer daily God's Son to God. For the rest, let him be content with this; doing his best to be with his people as one of themselves, in the valid and true sense of that phrase. I hope I have made myself clear in this regard. If I have not, I would ask those who read these lines to take a look at Pope John Paul. Nichols, I think, is so wrong when he attributes the Holy Father's fantastic ability to draw the crowds to himself to his showmanship, sheer natural exuberance or a combination of both, which ties in with his past as an actor of considerable skill, to produce in Pope John Paul a personal magnetism that compels people in their thousands to come to him. Nichols is most certainly entitled to his view, but, frankly, I do not believe it for a moment. The source of the Holy Father's compulsion with people is found in the love he bears them, really and truly, for Christ's sake. Where he is concerned, not one of them is a unit. Together, they are not an outsize ant-heap as he looks out on them when he speaks. In no way. Where John Paul is concerned, each one of them is a person, living and to be loved, because made by God in His image and saved by His Son.

This Pope lives by that belief. It is the source of his rapport with men. Love is his way. That is why he is uncomfortable with bureaucracies including, I would imagine, the Roman Curia. It is very much to his credit that he is.

Love and Effective Authority

It is only out of this love that effective authority can grow within the Church today. It must find a firm foundation at the bottom. This is why we need not bother too much if—Pope John Paul himself very much excluded—authority at the top and middle of the Church misfires at times so very badly in its relations with others, particularly the Faithful themselves. By contrast, Pope John Paul has broken through to the Faithful at one bound so to say, by reason of the Christ-like love, so deep in him, that binds him to men and women as persons to be loved, quite simply and openly, for what they are. This is the secret of his dynamism. Christ within him Who takes him to others for Christ's sake. His words to himself as he goes to them must be, I think, those of St. Paul, "*Caritas Christi urget nos*"; and again, "For them I sanctify myself"; yet again, "My little children for whom I am in labour until Christ be formed in you". John Paul seems to me to live those words. Love is his lodestar. Having this the rest follows. He is no functionary, no official, as so many others in authority so obviously are. These "deal" with people. John Paul loves them. Thereby, in a sense, he isolates himself from others in authority who have not his way—at base, because they have not his love. His own Curia, I fear, is distant from him precisely because it is distant from people as he is not. His dilemma is to bring them to bridge that gap. Restructuring will do little or nothing in this regard. I think John Paul knows this too. Love is the key. Despite his isolation, John Paul holds it firmly in his hand. Because of it he can hold out God's truth to men, unswerving in his allegiance to it where doctrine and morals and the whole field of social teaching and justice are concerned. And men will take what he says because they know that he is speaking to them, not as a functionary or a wooden disciplinarian, but as one who for Christ's sake has taken them to his heart.

Needed Most : The Recovery of the Supernatural

Out of this comes reinforcement for the thought, which has been mine for so long, that restructuring is quite inadequate as a *primary* remedy where the present troubles of the Church are concerned. Love will shape structures to suit its dynamism : structures do not create love. To this end what the members of the Church need so desperately today is the recovery of the supernatural, that love of Christ which sends them out to others for His sake, firm in their possession of His truth. The combination is unbeatable. Precisely because Christ's love had placed them firmly in possession of it, the missionary effort of the early Church—thoroughly disorganized though it was — swept through what was then known, rightly or wrongly, as the civilised world like a prairie fire. For this there can be no substitute. So-called democratic reforms mean nothing in this regard. Their effect since, but not because of the Council, has been the enthronement within the Church of a progressive elite, skilled in the art of Democratic-Centralism—the manipulation of the majority by a progressive minority intent on its own advantage. Liverpool's National Pastoral Congress provided a sad example of this kind of manoeuvre, as Detroit, in the United States, had done so beforehand. None of us who watched its unlovely progress were in any way surprised as what went on or at its outcome because, from the start, we were under no illusions with regard to it. There is no future for the Church in this kind of activity. Neither is it to be found in that which takes place in the social field, not on account of Christ, but more or less as a substitute for Him. There is plenty of this about, too much; and it reduces itself in a very short time to little more than a vague humanitarianism. The cure for it is not to be found in a retreat from the world; on the contrary, in a going out to the world, lifting it up, serving it for Christ's sake and no other.

Here is the Essence

I found in the pages of Peter Nichols' most readable book, which I would commend to readers despite my differences with its Author, a couple of pages at the end of his tenth chapter, which seem to me to sum up the essence of what I have been trying to say in this article.

I am thankful for the perceptiveness that led Nichols to write them. It is greatly to his credit that he wrote them as he did. I shall quote from them and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions. Further comment on my part would be out of place :

"While travelling I have several times encountered . . . the nuns belonging to the order based on the teachings of Charles de Foucauld, the Little Sisters of Jesus . . . these nuns genuinely seek concealment. They do not want to make themselves talked about. They do not want the covers of the news magazines. They feel that publicity would harm their activities . . ."

"Their aim is the imitation of Jesus. They have no difficulty in imitating a man, no feminist urge to create difficulties about the question of whether a male Redeemer can equally well redeem women. They speak with total sincerity when they talk of love as being a quality which implies no discrimination or distinction between the sexes. They do not seek to express this love in what are commonly called good works. They do not have schools or hospitals or model farms. They live in groups of three or four among the people whom they feel might profit from an example of how they believe Jesus meant us to live. They live like the people around them: on a junk in Hong Kong harbour, in a mud hut in Africa, a hut in the Rome slums, in wool tents if they join the desert nomads . . . They are among the prostitutes of Turin, the shanty-towns of Casablanca, the hill villages of Calabria. And their object is pure example. They have no other way of teaching. They do humble work. They will speak, and their eyes become suddenly shining and distant, about the thirty years Jesus spent working humbly in Nazareth. 'They must have had great importance for his mission', they say. He did not want to be remarkable. He wanted to live as an ordinary man, in an ordinary family. There was unity there with the rest of the neighbours. They talk of this ordinariness and then they move, seemingly soundless but with long, quick, sandalled steps towards their simple wooden chapel. . . .

"They have no worries about the changes which must come as the basis of the Church moves from Europe to

other countries. They themselves (there are about 1200 of them) come from all the continents. They welcome the idea that people young in their Christianity will bring a contribution to it. They accept that whatever happens to the Church happens because of the action of the Holy Spirit. They prefer to work among non-Christians, but if they are with nominally Christian people, they accept the normal structures, going to Church like exemplary parishioners. The one distinction they make is to wear their habits. They want it to be clear that they are Christian sisters, even if they are evicted from their homes by the police like the black neighbours among whom they have been living in a South African city, or are out of work like the other women when a factory closes. . . .

“ They are not even missionaries in any classical sense of the term because they do not preach as such. They show people what being Christian should be.

“They are not interested in numbers. They have a simple system of government which is based on an elected Superior and a Council. There would be more of them if they accepted every young woman that asks to be considered. Their principal house (in Rome) is very close to the place where Paul was supposed to have been martyred. I did not have the heart to ask any of them what they consider Paul would have thought of them. One wonders. Did he ever give any thought to those obscure years when Jesus was quietly working in Nazareth and, totally unpredictably, preparing a revolution, which all admit was the world's biggest religious event and which *only a few try to follow in the simplicity of its origins*”. (Italics mine).

PLEASE NOTE

It would be the greatest help if those who have had reminders, but have not yet renewed their subscriptions would do so *without delay*. Much depends on whether or not you do this. Thank you so much in advance.

Paul Crane, S.J.

This intensely moving pen - portrait of a contemporary hero of the Church should bring strength to us all; a firm resolution to stand by the Faith of our Fathers in these difficult days at no matter what cost to ourselves. Acknowledgements to the *Mirror of "Aid to the Church in Need"*.

Fortis in Fide

FR. WERENFRIED VAN STRAATEN

ON 25th April 1981 I took part in the funeral rites for Bishop Boleslas Sloskans, the exiled Apostolic Administrator of Mohilev and Minsk, who died on Easter Saturday at the age of 88 in his Belgian exile. The monks of the Benedictine Abbey at Louvain, where this venerable witness of Christ had spent the last thirty years of his life, sang the Gregorian melodies of the Easter liturgy proclaiming not only the victory of the risen Christ but also that of His servant Boleslas. Over his mortal remains rang out the words of St. Paul: "Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked". And our Lord Himself gave His persecuted bishop the solemn assurance: "Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kind of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven" (Mt. 5, 11-12).

Bishop Sloskans was born in a village named Sterniene on 31st August 1893 and was ordained priest on 21st January 1917 at St. Petersburg, the present-day Leningrad, where he worked as an assistant priest until 10th May 1926. On that day he was secretly consecrated bishop by Mgr. d'Herbigny in Moscow and entrusted with the pastoral care of the dioceses of Mohilev and Minsk. Eight months later he was arrested and on 27th September 1927 he was sentenced to three years forced labour on the infamous island of Solowki in the White Sea. From there he was deported

to Siberia, where for three years the G.P.U. tried to make him confess to espionage. His invariable answer was: "Although you know I am innocent you want to execute me as a spy, but I will die as a martyr of Holy Church".

He suffered for the faith in 17 Soviet prisons. In Lubjanka prison in Moscow he was bound naked to a table and flogged until he bled. He was forced standing upright into a narrow cage where every movement was impossible and ice-cold water dripped on his head day and night. For weeks he lay chained to the ground on his back under the dazzling beam of a floodlight. For three months he languished in the pitch-black condemned cell, waiting for his execution; his only food was a vile soup and he could only estimate the time by the steps of other prisoners being taken from neighbouring cells to be shot. In spite of all this torture his spirit remained unbroken. Unceasingly he meditated and prayed the stations of the cross and the mysteries of the rosary. When a jailer, seeing his smile, exclaimed in astonishment: "Are you happy?!", the bishop answered: "Yes, because I am quite free, and you are not".

In 1933, the Latvian Government obtained his release in exchange for a Russian spy. The Bishop refused to leave the Soviet Union, feeling that it was his duty as a shepherd to stay with his flock. When a Church diplomat falsely informed him that the Pope had called him to Rome he obeyed with a bleeding heart. In Rome Pope Pius XI gave the lie to his Nuncio's statement and confirmed the principle that a bishop must stay with his flock. When many years later this principle was once more violated he entrusted me with his secret, giving me permission to reveal it after his death. I do so now out of love for the Church, in which diplomats must play a subordinate role, not a leading one.

He remained in Latvia until 1944. The retreating Germans brought him to Germany. The Soviets murdered all his family. No suffering could embitter him. He had learned from his mother to pray more for the murderers than for the murdered. Until 1963 he was the good shepherd of all refugees from White Russia and Latvia. He was humble, kindly, peace-loving and above all a man of prayer. I hope that he will soon be beatified.

John Paul II has stirred up a great deal of hostility because he does not allow Christianity to be treated as anything less than a claim to truth. Reference is to the American scene, and capable of much wider application.

Reverend James V. Schall, S.J., is now teaching at Georgetown University after having taught at the University of San Francisco and the Gregorian University in Rome for the past twelve years. Acknowledgements to *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*.

Criticizing John Paul II

JAMES V. SCHALL, S.J.

"It is the wisdom of this world to conceal the heart with stratagems, to veil one's thoughts with words, to make what is true appear false. On the other hand, it is the wisdom of the just never to pretend anything for show, always to love the truth as it is and to avoid what is false, to do what is right without reward and to be more willing to put up with evil than to perpetuate it, not to seek revenge for wrong, and to consider as gain any insult for truth's sake."

— Gregory the Great. Pope. †604 AD, from his *Moral Reflections on Job*.

WHAT John Paul II might make of the various efforts to interpret him, often to interpret him away, is kept pretty much private. That he has received so much criticism from within the Church especially may have surprised him, but he was too close to Paul VI not to have realized what was in store for a clear, firm, and intelligent pope, when it came to time to make decisions, define points of controversy, or appoint fellow bishops or advisors. We thus begin even to hear hints from some sources that the Pope may be a brooding "Torquemada" (T. Sheehan, *New York Review of Books*, February 7, 1980). In the popular Sunday Supplement, *Parade*, Lloyd Shearer assessed the Holy Father in this way, an assessment that reveals perhaps more about the critics than about the Pope:

It's been two years since Karol Wojtyla, a Polish priest, became Pope John Paul II—enough time for theologians to study his performance and pass judgment in print. To date much of the Pope's assessment has been made by Peter Hebblethwait . . . a former Jesuit, now married, the author of *The New Inquisition*. . . . According to the author, this Pope is a rigid charismatic conservative. . . .

(Others say) that the Vatican incumbent is not particularly interested in modern ideas and problems—such as women priests, marriage for priests, and birth control—or in any force remotely threatening the authority of the Papacy. They say he is no intellectual innovator, no imaginative adapter—but essentially an impatient, energetic conservative determined to reinforce traditional dogma and hoping somehow to stay the tide of Soviet Marxism by infecting it with the virtues and values of the Catholic Church. (*San Jose Mercury*, July 27, 1980).

Of course, by almost any definition of the office, any "pope" who would do the things suggested in such an analysis simply would not be a pope. In any case, Karol Wojtyla would do well to recall Pope Gregory's wise words about "considering as gain any insult for truth's sake", while he reflects on how he is seen.

It is the Content that threatens

Yet, there seems to be a growing awareness that the problem of properly evaluating John Paul II may lie mostly with the evaluators. John Roche has noted that "a number of American rightwingers" see the Pope as "undermining the structure of authority which can only aid the Communists" ("The Communist Cardinal", *San Francisco Examiner*, July 21, 1980). Roche's own view is that the Pope stands for a kind of democratic center in politics and economics that should have been in place long ago. Likewise, *The Washington Post*, which has never been particularly sympathetic towards the Holy Father, showed signs in its editorial on the Pope's Brazilian visit of realizing more clearly the uniqueness of the man:

The more we see of this pope, however, the less certain we are that he can be made to march to any drum-beat but his own. He has been making clear in Brazil his passion for social justice. . . But he has also been making

clear his aversion to the clergy's involving itself in secular movements, especially Marxist movements, which, he believes, in the name of social idealism violate human dignity and nourish a 'sterile and destructive' class war. One does not have to share John Paul's religion in order to respect his determination to keep it vital *as a faith*, not simply as a social gospel.

One does not have to be a Catholic, of course, to fight poverty. But one does not have to be a Marxist or a revolutionary either. That is what we take to be the burden of the pope's creed: peaceful change is the urgent need. (July 8, 1980).

John Paul's specific rejection of ideological solutions to contemporary problems, his insistence on an independent "Catholic" doctrine which is not merely a pale imitation of marxist or liberal categories, is thus beginning to be understood.

George Will, I think, has sensed that opposition to this Pope raises issues in a way much deeper than those of the proper developmental forms. Feeling the Chestertonian point that what is behind the opposition to John Paul II is really his position that there is a truth, that modern humility of intellect is really a skepticism about truth, Will suggests that the Pope is mostly attacked because he directly challenges the presumed first truth of our era, the idea that there really is no norm, no truth, so the Pope ought to be able to conform the Church to *any* set of contemporary values or practices:

The Roman Catholic Church's claim that its teaching in matters of faith and morals is providentially guaranteed against error is not really what rankles many people about today's Pope. The reason this Pope stirs uneasiness, and the reason his example is of political as well as theological interest, is that he makes vivid a timeless and awkward truth about communities, political or religious. That truth is that any community determined to endure must charge some authority with the task of nurturing, defending and transmitting those convictions. ("A Pope with Authority," *Newsweek*, June 23, 1980, p. 92).

Almost invariably, the deepest opposition to John Paul II is not merely against the principle of authority in any cohesive organization that wants to survive in time, but

rather against the content of specifically Christian truth. The reason why the Vatican is "not particularly interested in modern ideas and problems" — to use Lloyd Shearer's biased phrase again—is not because such ideas, taken as examples of modernity, are really "modern" but because they are wrong ideas. Truth and falsity are not questions of time. Something that is an "idea" does not, like a tree, grow from an acorn of falsity into a full bloom of truth. The critics of John Paul II do not arise because of the particular "era" in which he lives but because of his affirmation — found constantly in his already long and profound list of papal writings — about the "truth" of the traditional faith in its very essentials. His first Encyclical in particular, *Redemptor Hominis*, means nothing if it does not mean this. The theoretical "untruth" of Christianity has been one of the foundations of the "modern" mind. Those still dogmatically committed to this theoretical untruth are right to see in John Paul II a real threat.

And so, there is a kind of "new inquisition" about in the world, but not the kind Peter Hebblethwaite might fancy to exist. Perhaps there is nothing John Paul II has more insisted upon than the true value of religious and intellectual freedom, that freedom is the only atmosphere of faith (Cf. R. Heckel, *Religious Freedom: Texts of John Paul II*, Rome, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, 1980). Inquisitors, I think, do not say what John Paul II said to the Intellectuals in Rio de Janeiro :

True *cultura animi* is a culture of freedom, which springs up from the depth of the spirit, from lucidity of thought and from the generous disinterestedness of love. Apart from freedom, there can be no culture. . . Culture must not be subjected to any coercion of power, either political or economic, but must be helped by both. . . Culture which is born free should also spread in a free system. Now man cannot be fully himself, he cannot fulfil his humanity completely, if he does not recognize and does not love the transcendence of his own being over the world, and his relationship with God. (July 1, 1980).

And so this freedom means a relationship to truth, means that not everything is now equally valid. There is, then, an effort within Christianity, largely liberal or socialist in

origin, that seeks to obscure or interpret away the Christian originality of this Pope by making his freshness and wisdom seem to be merely "conservative" and slightly alien. Joseph Sobran, who has been greatly influenced by this Pope, has summed up the situation rather accurately: "Liberal Catholics have ceased believing the Church has any real mission in the world, any right to demand the world's submission to her message, and instead regard themselves as the world's missionaries to the Church" (*Less Catholic than the Pope?* New York, 1979, p. 12). This means in practice that classical Christianity, judged largely impossible to live, is obscured in favor of a Christianity whose stressed doctrines and practices come from secular society as the criterion of truth rather than from any abiding deposit of faith to which an authoritative papacy is itself responsible.

They've seen their match

As an example of this, to return to Lloyd Shearer's three instances by which theologians judge John Paul II to be "uninterested in modern ideas and problems," it will be recalled that the first, about women priests, is, as C. S. Lewis pointed out in his essay "Priestesses in the Church?," older than Christianity itself, while married clergy is a question older than celibate clergy. And birth control is indeed a modern "problem" because, as *World Business Weekly* recently remarked, "declining birthrates and aging populations now foreseen will have far-reaching political, social, and economic consequences" (July 28, 1980, p. 7). Few of the recent rash of articles on "immigration" ever mention that, in reality, immigrants are people *not* birth-controlled or aborted out of existence coming to replace those who were. No wonder Colin Clark recently told a graduating class in Southern California that the most important thing they could do would be to marry and have children. So much for "modern" examples. Still, Professor James Hitchcock seems quite right that it is very difficult for the ordinary Christian ever to hear from press or pulpit what this Pope actually teaches or what the Church doctrinally holds. "The blunt truth is that there is a well-organized and widespread process of liberal repression in this country. Orthodox Catholics are denied in effect the right to exist" (*National Catholic Register*, May 25, 1980).

Thus, the often frenetic enterprise of reducing John Paul II to manageable size — that is, to terms compatible with current socialist or liberal theories—is of some importance to follow. Aside from the sheer energy of his foreign and Italian travels, John Paul II, in 1979, for instance, wrote a total of 2329 pages in their Italian version, pages of astonishing profundity. And with Turin, Turkey, Africa, Paris, and Brazil, this is a pace that shows no sign of letting up. John Paul II, in the name of the presumably “surpassed, unmodern” Christian faith, has thus challenged the very intellectual integrity and political orientations of the dominant media, the political and university organs of the modern world. We are only just beginning to grasp that this Pope of Rome is easily the match on his own terms and grounds for any philosopher or theologian in our time, or perhaps any time. The loaded accusation “inquisitor” used of him strikes one as a sort of desperate admission of his strength, rather than any valid analysis of his character and understanding of his office.

“Hold on to the faith”

The Holy Father is, then, very prolific and very comprehensive. Even his most devoted followers have a difficult time in keeping up with him and assimilating all he says and writes. The journalist’s temptation, too often shared by academics, is merely to give up, to neglect the effort to come to terms with what is being said. In this connection, *The Economist* of London (April 5, 1980), emphasized, rather sharply, the general incapacity of such American journals as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* to understand the power and nature of the religious revival that is presently going on in the United States (Cf. also J. Kaufman, “Old-Time Religions,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 11, 1980). As a result, religion is mostly ignored or explained — wrongly — in terms comfortably suitable to socialist or liberal categories, but ones that fail to come to grips with the religious reality itself, a reality John Paul himself frequently stresses. This same bias in key places prevents a good part of the western world from understanding the meaning of religious motivations of any sort, whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Jewish. The result, then, is either a political policy that seeks to transcend

religion, seeing religion as a threat to politics, or a policy that analyzes all human motivations in economic terms, usually those of poverty, which assume that such motivations are the only ones that move the vast majority of existing humanity. This narrows or reduces actually existing human beings to but one level by making "facts" conform to the ideological projections of dominant western secular theories. It is remarkable how frequently Pope Wojtyla keeps returning to the dangers of these ideological restrictions on the openness of man to a higher value and presence. The Pope symbolically demonstrates this point when, as in Upper Volta to victims of poverty and drought, he speaks of the most profound spiritual truths, not just about social conditions (May 10, 1980). The Pope recognizes the most profound depths of spirit in the least and most disadvantaged to which he is primarily called.

Writing in *L'Avvenire* from Paris on the eve of the papal visit to France, Angelo Bertani interviewed several people about the conditions of French Catholicism. It seemed clear at the time that *Le Monde*, the leading journal, and segments of the French government did not want the visit to be the success it turned out to be. Among those interviewed was an Uruguayan priest officially stationed in Paris for several years. He felt that there was much more popular faith in France than was often admitted. In a reflection pertinent to the theme here, Father Paolo Dabezias went on:

If one reads *Le Monde*, for example, he has an image (of faith) that is rather false. The same is true of the visit of the Pope. There is a preconceived polemic, a lack of comprehension. But all French journals fail to understand the popularity of the Pope. They have a "superiority complex." And even certain French Catholic circles have a sort of fear of the multitudes. (May 30, 1980).

This strikes rather close to the heart of the matter. What indeed is the cause of the opposition to this Pontiff, both within the Church and in western intellectual establishments? No doubt, one of the favorite tactics is to make of John Paul II a simple Polish cleric still blinking under the bright lights of western sophistication. Needless to say, there is not a little prejudice in this. A critical friend said, "How could this man from Poland go to Zaire and presume

to speak to a different culture?" How indeed? It seems useless to argue that some of John Paul's most brilliant discourses—in Warsaw, to UNESCO, in Rio—have been on precisely the nature of culture. But if there is nothing in Christianity or in reason that transcends all cultures, something graspable, explainable, even by a Pope, then Karol Wojtyla should certainly return to Krakow and bless babies. But we should all then drop our universalist pretensions. We should admit that our philosophy does not allow *any* cultural transcendence.

But no one who saw or heard John Paul II speak in clear, vigorous French at Notre Dame de Paris, in perhaps one of the most elegant and symbolic scenes of contemporary history, can ever quite buy the doctrine that here we have a culture-bound peasant from behind the Iron Curtain. This Pope speaks to a good part of the world in its own language, and he speaks to most of the disciplines in terms of their own competence. So is there no cause for complaint? Is the Pope not acting too fast, with too much assurance? Is he not giving too many definitive answers? What is he preparing us for? Some say, of course, he is preparing us for what it is like when we are all behind the Iron Curtain. But others will maintain that Pope Wojtyla is too used to dealing with tough marxist bureaucrats, so he cannot grasp the ways of freedom, of democracy. Others argue that he sees it his duty to confront a problem—in Holland, in Latin America, in Philadelphia—head on, to hear all sides patiently, to know the debate, but then to decide and to expect his faithful to follow him. And generally, especially among those who insist that his re-emphasized position on birth control and abortion *must* be wrong, there is a fear that the Pope will indeed close off all debate on the subject. This would mean that the Church means what it says it means, so we can act on this basis. Still others protest, "Enough of this Catholicism that keeps saying one thing and doing another, with such theologians who keep telling us the very opposite of what the Pope teaches!"

John Paul II, for his part, however, seems to have a basic message for Catholicism. Thus, in doctrine and in administration and in discipline, the themes he keeps coming back to, without in the least denying our sinful heritage, the

Pope urges the keeping of the faith held. He is not about to be tempted by the socialist-type mistake of looking for a kind of heaven here on Earth. Nor does he doubt that the Gospel has a positive effect among men, even in their social and public lives. But why the Pope raises so much dust wherever he fires is probably because he does not allow Christianity to be treated as anything less than a claim to truth. Without this particular faith, man cannot understand the "whole truth about himself." Such is the Holy Father's basic doctrine. He will no longer permit the comfort of a Christianity serving as a kind of established veneer to the dominant ideologies that run our societies. "Beloved Brothers", he told some Bishops from Columbia, "I wish to repeat here something . . . (I said) in Puebla. As Pastors of the Church, let us be aware of being teachers of truth: this is what the faithful look for in us . . ." (September 25, 1979). This is how John Paul II reacts to the substance of much of the criticism:

There will be people who, with an attitude of facile criticism, think that this community of faith in Christ lives quite bewildered, in the midst of a society actuated by purely earthly motives and geared to profit and enjoyment, including what is just and honest, of material goods. They claim to reduce the Gospel to one doctrine among so many others of a humanitarian nature, which can serve very well as an alibi to escape from the pressing human and social problems of our time. The pastors themselves . . . are considered foolish people for preaching a hope which is not easily reconciled with worldly gain.

Consequently, it would be viewed with pleasure if Christian communities would undertake other ways of salvation and give priority to alignment in favor of socio-political commitment, in the name of an alleged authentic interpretation of the evangelical doctrines which in addition 'to passing over in silence the divinity of Christ, claims to show him as politically committed, as one who fought against Roman oppression and the authorities, and also as one involved in the class struggle.' (*Ibid.* Cf. also R. Heckel, *General Aspects of the Social Catechesis of John Paul II* and *The Theme of Libera-*

tion, both Rome, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, 1980).

Thus, this Pope will "suppress" no one, but neither will he pretend that everything said or practised is equally Christian.

Consequently, when we examine the orderly and methodological way that John Paul II has gone about the world in his travels, made episcopal appointments, zeroed in on key issues, answered basic doubts and confusions — he clearly conceives his task to "strengthen" his brother bishops—we cannot help but recognize that here is no Grand Inquisitor. When John Paul II was in Paris, a French journal accused him of "scolding" the French instead of listening to them. To this, the American journalist Louis Fleming responded :

There have been common threads through his discourses to the bishops : appeals for their unity, for them to live exemplary lives. He has noted his support of justice and human rights, and his opposition to priests playing a direct role in politics. He has appealed for Christians to speak out on issues of morality, justice, and peace.

There is, for all of this, little about him that is a scold. There is much that seems dedicated to discouraging permissiveness and encouraging respect for doctrine and discipline, as written and interpreted over two millennia of the Church's experience. He would like to leave no doubt about where he and the Church stand. (*Herald-Tribune*, Zurich, June 10, 1980).

The Pope, then, is not going to allow us the comfort of presenting Christianity to our contemporaries or to ourselves as if somehow its primary purpose were to achieve certain goals or ends, set forth by the dominant ideologies.

John Paul II is himself a philosopher, at Thomist in his intellectual approach, a Thomist who knows the currents and tendencies of classic and contemporary philosophy. In fact, one of the most significant events in recent Thomism was John Paul II's discourse on the subject at the Angelicum University in Rome (November 17, 1979). There he re-directed and deepened the philosophic connection of

faith and reason by virtue of the realism of St. Thomas (Cf. A. McNicholl, "A Chant in Praise of What Is," *Angelicum*, 2, 1980; V. Possenti, "Giovanni Paolo II e Tomiso," *Rassegna di Theologia*, Gennaio, 1930; A. Woznicki, *A Christian Humanism: Karol Wojtyla's Existential Personalism*, New Britain, CT., Mariel, 1980). "Wojtyla's primary concern as a philosopher," Professor Guido Küng of the University of Freiburg wrote, "is clearly to infuse new life into Aristotelian Thomistic metaphysics by always confronting it afresh with a wealth of concrete experience" (*Universitas*, Stüttgart, 2, 1979). This Pope, moreover, seems quite aware that the old opposition of science and religion has had its day. He seems to grasp what Stanislaus Jaki has been arguing that the issues posed by faith to science, by the authentic Christian dogmas, to be exact, enable science to be itself (Cf. S. Jaki, *The Road of Science and the Ways of God*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978; cf. John Paul II's Address at Einstein Commemoration, November 10, 1979). The worldview expressed in and envisioned by orthodox Christianity seems the best preparation to why we can have science in the first place (Cf. Professor Hodgson, "Third World Science," *The Tablet*, London, January 6, 1979).

Who is speaking to man?

In this connection, it is of interest to compare Mortimer Adler's arguments in his new and brilliant book, *How to Think about God: A Guide for the 20th Century Pagan* (New York, Macmillan, 1980), wherein he seeks to establish a purely philosophical proof for the existence of God over against the classic Christian proofs, which, in Adler's view, presuppose faith. For Adler, the final proof, one not based on any faith, concerns the fact that the cosmos, this cosmos, could be otherwise, so that if it exists, as it obviously does, some reason outside itself with a capacity to cause it, must be posited. This is of significance in the light of John Paul II's remarks to an Italian scientific Study Group. The Pope's words are in line with those of Professor Adler, both of whom acknowledge their debt to St. Thomas. And the Pope addressed himself to the very "bridge", as Adler called it, between faith and reason :

Cosmology, a science of the totality of what exists as experimentally observable being, is therefore endowed with a special epistemological status of its own, which sets it more than any other perhaps at the borders of philosophy and religion, since the science of totality leads spontaneously to the question about totality itself, a question which does not find its answers within this totality. . . .

Is it not a question, fundamentally, of the great mystery: one that is at the root of all things, of the cosmos and its origins, as well as of man who is capable of studying it? If the universe is, as it were, an immense world which, though with difficulty and slowly, can at last be deciphered and understood, who is it who says this word to man? (September 28, 1979).

It is at this point that Mortimer Adler, the philosopher and the "Pagan", contrasts so much with Karol Wojtyla, the philosopher and the Pope. The latter, rightly, announces how faith looks at this evidence; the former, again rightly, acknowledges that pure reason cannot go so very far.

Disagree but do not confuse

The Pope in any case, is the last person to demand conformity or "blind obedience". His position on religious liberty, which is the first right for him, and intellectual honesty is of another spirit (Cf. R. Heckel, *Religious Freedom: Texts of John Paul II*, Rome, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, 1980). What he does demand is honesty about argument, evidence, the taking of ideas seriously, and, perhaps more importantly, the taking the real consequences of ideas seriously. He will not, furthermore, allow the faithful to be confused. If he ever shows signs of real anger, it is probably when he sees simple people confounded in their beliefs or practices by sophisticated academics. And I have the impression that it is quite all right to disagree with John Paul II. If one should do so, he should have his evidence clear, arguments marshalled. But no one should expect this very intelligent man to be impressed with disagreement just for disagreement's sake.

In this connection, Michael Novak seems largely correct when he argued that John Paul II does not fully understand

the dynamics of democratic capitalism and the contributions it can make to the proper alleviation of the world's poor, a theme dear to the Pope ("The Politics of John Paul II," *Commentary*, December, 1979). Mr. Novak senses the openness of John Paul II as well as the obligation to analyze the Holy Father's own ideas in a serious fashion. French socialist clerics have been quick to pick up on those marxist phrases that have sometimes appeared in the Pope's writings—"the poor are getting poorer, the rich richer", for example (Cf. V. Cosmao, "A distance de Puebla," *Lumen Vitae*, Brussels, 3, 1979). Such passages come to be used to embrace a very different kind of social position from the one suggested by John Paul II. The Holy Father would be quite open to the evidence that, in fact, everyone is getting richer, but at different rates, that the "gap" between rich and poor is not as important as general growth itself. This does not mean that things are just fine, but it does emphasize the direction taken by Roger Heckel in his important essay, *Self-reliance* (Rome, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, 1978). Romano Rossi has remarked that John Paul II has already developed this idea of self-reliance into a broader and more valuable idea, that of a reciprocal need of exchange, both material and cultural, for self-reliance itself to grow (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 Giugno, 1980).

The Pope, then, does not mind disagreement, provided it does not become an instrument to confuse the faithful (Cf. Pope's Discourse to Gregorian University, December 15, 1979). He does care enormously about what we claim the faith to contain. If what is taught about it turns out to be not what is handed down, especially if this is taught in some semi-official manner, he will react vigorously. This is why he really complimented Hans Küng. He held that Professor Küng did *mean* what he said, and that what he said had *meaning*. On this basis, he concluded, after long patient investigation, that on certain definite points Hans Küng did not mean what Catholic Christianity means. This is a service to the truth, to the faithful, and to Hans Küng. Inquisition it is not. In exercising his judgment, the Pope does not pretend to do anything more than to state the intelligence and sense of the faith to which he himself is obliged. He never gives the slightest impression that what

he stands for is his, that he had a direct hand in "making" the norms he preaches and teaches. And significantly, the Pope does not forbid anyone from writing or speaking—a trait not always shared by the secular and Christian left, as Professor Hitchcock, alas, pointed out. He only forbids us from confusing the faith for the simple faithful. This way is not only the more preferred way, but the one that most effectively puts everyone on guard that it is the truth that obliges us, the truth to which we, along with the Pope himself, are obliged (UN Address, October 2, 1979).

This is indeed an extra-ordinary Pope. Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote of him :

I have given him my heart, and the readers should know why. He is the first Pope with a wholly 20th Century intellectual formation, and perhaps the first person in this century to come to institutional eminence having grappled with, possibly mastered, the principle philosophical question of our time, which is the question of totalitarianism. ("The Pope and the Modern Mind," *The Washington Post*, Supplement, October 7, 1979, p. 29).

John Paul II's trouble is that he is ahead, not behind most of the intellectuals of his time. And in an odd way, John Paul II has been rather forced to be more of a teaching bishop in every diocese than he would want to be. There are not a few who hold that his trouble with the Church is rooted in the lethargic performance of the episcopates.

The perspective is eternity

John Paul II is, above all, a teacher. "Man has a profound need to know if it is worth being born," he told the Italian Solidarity Center,

if it is worthwhile living, struggling, suffering, and dying; if it is important to commit himself to some ideal, superior to material and contingent interests; if, in a word, there is a reason that justifies earthly existence.

This, then, remains the central question : to give meaning to man, to his choices to his life in history

Jesus points out that the real meaning of our earthly existence lies in eternity and that the whole of human

history with its dramas and its joys must be seen in the perspective of eternity. (August 5, 1979).

The Washington Post was correct, it is vitally important for mankind that Christianity be kept *as a faith*, and not merely as a social gospel. Men may not all believe in Christianity, but it is essential that Christians believe in it, that its particular answers to the "whole truth about man" be not obscured or distorted, that religious freedom include the freedom to be also, in James Hitchcock's phrase, an "orthodox Catholic" in the manner of John Paul II.

But when John Paul II stresses the perspective of eternity in which Christians do live their lives, he immediately turns to the accusation he knows is waiting in the wings, the accusation that Christians are not concerned about this world. John Paul II, as we have seen, thus does not wait until the United Nations or UNESCO or Notre Dame de Paris to say the most profound things. At an ordinary parish at Spinaceto one Sunday afternoon, he said :

The accusation is often leveled at Christianity that, directing man to ultimate and eternal realities, it diverts his attention from temporal matters. This reproof is based on a mistaken understanding of Christ's admonition to 'watch'. It is spoken in an eschatological perspective, but at the same time, it is open to all the fullness of the problems and tasks of man living on this Earth. Temporal existence brings forth a series of duties which constitute precisely the content of that 'watch', according to the Gospel. (November 18, 1979).

Thus, there is insistence on this world and the next, because it is exactly the same person involved in both. Revelation does also instruct us about this world. And we are reasonable beings. John Paul II has his own ways of transforming the Church. In a real sense, he is the true "liberal", against whom something very much like an "inquisition" must be launched by anyone who thinks that Christianity has no private or public right to be what it is, no authentic intelligence to call its own.

Thus, the words of Pope Gregory the Great still apply : "It is the wisdom of this world to conceal the heart with stratagems, to veil one's heart with words, to make what is false appear true and what is true appear false".

Book Review

SHORTS

Canon Francis Ripley's, **Diary of a Small Town Priest** (Print Origination, Stephenson Way, Formby Industrial Estate, Merseyside L37 8EG; pp. 250; £3.95) came out of a suggestion from his friends that he should write his autobiography. His reply, typically, was that he had not got the time. At which there came a second suggestion in the form of a reminder of G. K. Chesterton's observation that any educated man who got down to it would find that he could manage to write a page a day. If he held himself to this task, said the great man, he would find, at the end of a year, that he had written a book of 365 pages. This caught Canon Ripley's fancy. So he started with his first page of observations for his diary on May 6th, 1979 and wrote down his last a year later on May 6th, 1980. This book is the result.

It is very well worth reading. Wide-ranging and wise, written in a good plain, but extremely pleasant style, it deserves a wide circulation and I hope devoutly that it will get it. Canon Ripley is in that very fine tradition of the Lancashire priest at his best—plain-spoken, thank God, yet truly courteous always, powerful, not because he has sought power, but precisely because he has never sought it; his personality as a man speaks for itself and one sees why, in this matter of power, that is quite enough. Approachable, very kind, devoted utterly to the Faith of his Fathers: this is the priest who comes through in these pages. There are more like him in England even now than many think. The tendency has been to write them off as out of tune with the "new" post-conciliar Church. They are right so to be. Signs are that, before this century is out, the type they represent so well will come once more into its own. If readers want to recall it, they can do no better than read this excellent and entertaining book.

Those with the time to do so and the money to spare might like to compare it with Richard West's, *An English Journey* (Chatto & Windus; pp. 196, £8.50). After twenty

years, spent mostly on journalistic assignments abroad, the Author decided to give this Island a going-over and write up his journey. The result is pleasant enough, entertaining, but lacking the depth that comes easily to Canon Ripley's writing, simply because, effortlessly and effectively, it is set within the framework of principle that flows from within his Faith. Because of this, there is a depth here in the Canon's writing, not found in that of West, however entertaining it may be and, in fact, is. Father James Schall, too, has depth; but the impression one gets reading this—in many ways, excellent—short study of his, is that he labours a little too much to achieve it. Reference is to his recently published *Christianity and Life* (Ignatius Press, San Francisco; pp. 131; no price stated). The erudition that comes through in this book, as it does in so many of Fr. Schall's articles, is considerable. It would impress more if the name-dropping, which runs through it, were cut down to the bare minimum. The substance of what Father Schall has to say is admirable in its orthodoxy. He is fighting a very good fight on the right side and at an effective level. He will fight even better as he learns to take himself, perhaps, a little less seriously. These words are written against a background of very considerable admiration for a fellow Jesuit from the United States, who has stood so loyally by the Holy Father in past years and continues to do so in the present. His book is recommended.

Father Philip Caraman, the English Jesuit writer, known to not a few in this country for his admirable portrayals, in particular, of some of the most attractive of the Martyrs of England and Wales, has given us, in typical style, a history of the Gregorian University in Rome under the title of *University of the Nations* (Paulist Press; 545 Island Road, Ramsey, N.J. 07446, U.S.A.; pp. 157; \$6.95). The book is written exactly as it should be, particularly with reference to what might be described as popular consumption in today's increasingly non-reading world. There is the impress on this book of what is obvious scholarship, combined with a lightness of touch, which runs through the Author's writing and bears witness to the confidence he has in what he sets down. Here he is entirely correct, for what he sets down is the fruit of very sound knowledge of the historical settings within which his history of the "Greg."

is set. Combined, as it obviously is, with a mastery of relevant fact, the result can only be a rewarding piece of reading. Father Caraman's short book is exactly that.

I can say the same most certainly for *Pastoral Advice* (Benziger Sisters Publishers, 466 East Mariposa St., Altadena, Cal. 9100, U.S.A.; pp. 83; \$5.00), the Mss. of which was found amongst the personal effects and papers of Father David de Burgh after the young Salesian priest's untimely death. The Mss. was passed on to the indefatigable Benziger Sisters, who had published others of Father de Burgh's writings. They have done the same for this present piece of work. The result is a smallish volume of 84 pages, which is a useful size for today, especially in the matter of this sort of writing, which is as simple as it is profound, and deeply spiritual in the best sense of that much maligned word. In consequence, I would suggest that this book is in tune with what so many in the Church want today, yet never get—to no small extent because many bishops, priests and religious, caught in the drift towards secularism, are quite out of touch with the spirit that motivates this kind of writing and the desire of so many of the faithful for it.

Finally, a slim volume from India entitled, *Good News to the Poor* (Asian Trading Corporation, P.O. Box 11029, Bombay 400 020; pp. 144; US\$2.50), a series of quotations from the Gospels and other sources, put together by Father Cedric Rebello, S.J. and in illustration of the relationship that should exist, in his view, between the Church and those who are poor and oppressed. The development of this relationship is in no way easy. As yet, it has, in a sense, hardly begun. This booklet deserves a wide circulation; its contents need not only thinking over, but praying over, especially by the priests of the Church, on whom the task of forging this relationship will largely fall.

—Paul Crane, S.J.

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of

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to emphasise the importance of the

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LITURGY MORALITY CATECHETICS
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on SATURDAY, 20th FEBRUARY, 1982

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Contributions to the debate will be invited from
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Resolutions passed at the meeting will be for-
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England and Wales

"HOLD FAST TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD"
(St. Paul)